

Swami Dayanand's Contribution
TO
Hindu Solidarity

By
GANGA PRASAD UPADHYAYA

ARYA SAMAJ, CHOWK, ALLAHABAD

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TO
SHRI NARAYAN SWAMIJI
WHOSE SELFLESS WORK IN
THE CAUSE OF THE ARYA
SAMAJ IS WELL KNOWN

PREFACE

These days religion is looked upon as a bugbear. Yet mankind has not been able to give up religiosity. To banish religion is one thing; to try to free it from the bondage of pretenders quite another. We entirely agree with the view of the great modern scientist Max Planck *that the religious element in his nature must be recognised and cultivated if all the powers of the human soul are to act together in perfect balance and harmony*. True religiosity is the only bed-rock on which the great fabric of human progress can be built in safety. It is to expound this view that the books of the Religious Renaissance Series are being written.

GANGA PRASAD UPADHYAYA

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OM

SWAMI DAYANAND'S CONTRIBUTION TO HINDU SOLIDARITY

CHAPTER I

HINDU AND HINDUISM

Several efforts have been made to give a logical definition of 'Hindu' and they have miserably failed. Is 'Hindu' a religious unit, or a social unit or a political unit? What is the exact connotation of 'Hindu' nobody knows, yet everybody feels what 'Hindu' means. Political jugglers have often tried to entrap the educated Hindu mind into the meshes of logic and produce a cleavage between one section of Hindus and another. At times they have had success too, but either too ephemeral or too temporary. Here and there, or, now and then, we find a straggler or a section of stragglers trying to disclaim Hinduism, but not very long after, they come to realize their mistake, or at least find their dissentient zeal cooled down by circumstances and come

back to the old groove. The Sikh, the Brahmo, and the Arya Samajist are the recent examples. The Jam, the Baudhdha and several minor sects as the Lingait, perhaps, the old ones. Such is the glory of Hinduism—call it depth or call it breadth—that in spite of a myriad of disintegrating forces vehemently at work for tens of centuries Hinduism is still alive and kicking. Even its worst enemies cannot say that it is dead or has any signs of death about it. It has met thousands of political cataclysms, any one of which was sufficient to bury deep any other human unit. It has had myriads of social or religio-social shakes, the like of which have proved fatal elsewhere. But thanks to something undefinable or indescribable about it, it has withstood all calamities and survived all diseases. Just look back, these twenty centuries, at the changes that human society has undergone in different parts of this earth. Just compare the great nations that have risen and fallen from time to time. Just think of upheavals, great and small, that have meant life to a few, but death to many. Then calculate the losses—enormous no doubt, that Hinduism has suffered. Weigh all these and you will find that even the thickest clouds on the Hindu horizon have a silver lining—a ray of hope

that brightens the darkest recesses of a pessimist's mind and pushes it on in the path of progress. Hinduism never died. It often fell ill—sometimes very seriously too. But mortally?—not once. Even when the extremities grew cold and even breath seemed to be held up, the throb in the heart remained and life came back as if with magic. So adamant is Hindu life. If it is weak, no wonder. There are reasons for it. But the wonder of wonders is that it still exists—nay it lives. How tenacious is Hinduism! It has outlived thousands of earth-quakes and it is still promising to hold its own. No doubt, India was cent per cent Hindu in the past. Now Hindus are only two-thirds—24 crores (240 millions) out of 35 crores (350 millions). This is very unfortunate. To lose one-third is no small loss. It is enough to make one's heart sink. But there is another side of the picture too. Hinduism has fought against odds and at every inch too. Its tenacity can best be known by its comparison with the nations whose only remnants are their names either in the pages of contemporary history or in the archives of the archaeological department. Babylon is gone—gone for ever never to rise again. Where are Medes? Only mother earth

can say what became of them Carthage—the home of Hannibal—a mere name not found in modern Atlases But not so Delhi the home of Prithviraj or Chittor the home of Pratap They may not have their past glory But still there is a spark under the ashes There is that continuity of life which connects the past with the present and sends forth hopes for future

We shall not pause to define Hinduism Let dry logicians tap their brains about it For us suffice to say that every Hindu feels that he is a Hindu There is a traditional something within him that distinguishes him from others. It is also a waste of energy to trace the etymology of the word Hindu No doubt, we do not find 'Hindu' (हिन्दु) or 'Hinduism' (हिन्दुत्व) in ancient literature of the country, Sanskrit or even Prakrit 'Arya' is the most common word used for a lawful citizen It has been used not only in Vedic, but also in Budhistic or Jain literature It is in fact *the* word that every individual of the nation used for himself or herself Verily it was a noble word, conveying a noble sense It was a word of superbly noble connotation. It inspired its users with all that can be noble and good It was in fact a word which has no identical equivalent in human

language. But it has long come into disuse and 'Hindu' has taken its place. It may be a corrupted form of some Sanskrit word, possibly Sindhu, or Indu (सिन्धु या इन्दु) as some say. With some stretch of grammatical rules, it may be possible to prove it to be pure Sanskrit too. It may be foreign, as some hold. In Persian literature, there are casual examples of its having been used in the sense of 'black,' 'irreligious' or even 'thievish'¹. But it is difficult to prove that originally it is Persian or in Persian it is its primary sense. In the hands of Persian Moslem writers it might have been degraded as in the hands of Christian writers words 'heathen' or 'Pagan'. But as we said above, we are not concerned here with the etymology. We would have been too glad to replace it by 'Arya'. But that is quite a different thing. The most patent thing is that the word 'Hindu' has so long and so widely remained in vogue, both at home and abroad that this is the only word that can be safely and conveniently used at present whatever its etymology or primary sense.

¹ Vide Hāfi, *نکات هندویش بحکم سر قند و حکار را*

or Ghyasullughat for the word Hindu

Analysis of Hinduism may possibly drag us into undesirable controversies and foil our purpose. Dissection of a beautiful thing most often takes away all its beauty and leaves in its place something horrid, ugly and misshapen. It may possibly bring into exaggerated relief its weaknesses or throw into background its merits. We shall not defile it by touching. If later on in the course of discussion there be a need, we shall try to examine some of its features cautiously. At present a mere reference is sufficient ¹

¹ Shree Veer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, now the President of the Hindu Mahasabha has recently given the following definition of a Hindu —

आसिञ्चुसिञ्चयन्ता यस्य भारतभूमिका ।

पितृभू पुण्यभूश्चैव स वै हिंदुरिति स्मृत ॥

“A Hindu means a person who regards this Land of Bharatvarsh, from the Indus to the Seas, as his Fatherland as well as his Holyland.”

For many purposes it is an excellent definition, though geographical limitations diminish much of the charm that attaches itself to the word ‘Arya.’

CHAPTER II

FALL OF HINDUISM

The fall of Hinduism can be traced to several centuries before the Mahabharat. The history of the period is so obscure that it is difficult to go into the details of the question. Some persons have gone even so far as to deny any glory to the past of Hinduism. But we have grounds enough for not sharing their view. If vested interests are set aside, there are ample evidences not only in ancient Indian literature or ancient earthly remains that come to light by the labour of archaeologists, but also in ancient historical remains of other countries that testify to the greatness of the past of Hinduism. Just as there are rules to find the geological age of rocks, similarly there are rules to find the age of certain ancient institutions that have come down to us through several stages. There is no dearth of such things in Hindu literature or Hindu customs. Evolutionists are fond of tracing habits of man or animals to several pedigrees back. Customs are, so to speak, the habits of

nations which can also be traced back likewise. The institution of marriage with so many accompaniments, the classification of society on the basis of division of labour and several other secular or religious customs, which even today exist in some form or other clearly point to a grand past.

But decline began. Corruption crept in and the best institutions came to be abused. An acme seems to have been reached in the time of the Mahabharata. That was perhaps the sunset of Hindu glory. For since that time Hinduism has been only dragging on its existence. There have, no doubt, risen great persons like Gautam Buddha, Chandragupta or Asoka. But they were mere oases in a desert. Their influence did not go beyond a certain limit nor beyond a certain period. Gautam Buddha was, for instance, the most noteworthy figure. His influence was phenomenal in his lifetime and his successors remained for centuries the preceptors of neighbouring nations as well. But there was something in Buddhism that it could not long stay in India nor could it save the country from the clutches of foreigners. Ferozshah of Delhi is another figure worth noting, but only a gigantic firefly in a dark night.

It shone and set off, leaving the country blacker than before. A king whose history begins with a love-affair could not have fared better. Prithviraj and Jaichand were both brave, but neither of them could think beyond their personal selves. To think in national terms was not allowed to them, or, perhaps the national growth was at such a low ebb that it was impossible for them to rise higher. This period of Indian history can compare well with any period of any valiant nation in chivalry or valour. But it is conspicuous by the absence of that angle of vision which gives to our individual actions a national outlook. Sanjogata's love which was the initial mistake of Prithviraj's life proved a great tragedy not only for the great Kshattriya families of Delhi or Kanauj, but also for the whole of India. And the root cause was that while these heroes thought of their own valour, or interest or prestige, nobody cared for the internal forces that caused disintegration among the Hindus in general. Prithviraj and Jaichand both fought bravely, but for themselves, and with their death died the liberty of the nation for which, perhaps, they seldom thought.

It was only after receiving constant bruises of foreign yoke, that there came about some awaken-

ing At first we had never calculated what foreign intrusion means We were too engrossed in our home affairs. We had no experience whatsoever of dancing to another's tune Temporary gain was our sole thought When we opened our eyes, it was too late The field had gone to another's possession, and it was impossible to dislodge him We mourned our loss, we wept bitterly, we kicked too now and then But it was of no avail Our fetters became tighter and tighter There was only one ray of hope left. It was a dim feeling of our helplessness—a feeling that set us athinking Even when the Moslem subjugation of India was complete, we find traces of a feeble desire, if not strong determination, to throw off the foreign yoke and become free once more In fact in one sense the Moslem subjugation of India was never complete Afghanistan and Persia had fallen an easy prey to Moslem conquest They forgot their past altogether and surrendered their body and soul both to the conqueror They gave up all that had been dear to their ancestors They lost their identity and merged into Islam Not so the Hindus Their country was in another's hand Their body was a prisoner. Their hands and legs were in strong fetters They

were helpless. But the soul was still theirs. They could at least sigh. They could at least remember their past. They would now and then move their limbs too, though within restraint. To beat them down was easy, but to kill them outright became too difficult. This was realized by the conquerors. Several direct and indirect efforts were made. Sagacious rulers like Akbar used their sagacity. Fanatic rulers like Aurangzeb used their fanaticism. But neither sagacity nor fanaticism, neither wisdom nor folly of our foreign rulers could ever succeed in taking away the last breath out of our body. The wave of Islam—that furious sandy wave which rose in the heart of Arabian desert and which began to spread east and west with terrible rapidity—the wave that dried up the Euphrates and Tigris in a twinkling of the eye and did not take a long time to cover the Mediterranean, proved too feeble on this side of the Indus and by the time, it crossed the Ganges it had lost all its force. Our contemporary Moslem poet, the great Hali has beautifully put this in his famous verses

حبارِ حکاری کا بیباک نیز - نہ حیکوں میں اکتا نہ سیکوں میں ٹھٹکا
 کئے پار تے حسے ساتوں سمندر - گرا وہ دھانے میں بگنا کے آ کر

"That fearless fleet of the ships of Hedjaz, which neither stayed in the Jehun nor in the Senhu river, which had (easily) crossed the seven seas, fell wrecked in the mouth of the Ganges"

Fall it did indeed. There is no doubt about it. And the cause was that feeble spark of Hinduism which never extinguished totally and even when under the heap of ashes, could raise its head from time to time.

The first awakening of note-worthy character is found in the rise of those three great warriors Rana Pratap of Chittor, Sivaji of Deccan and Guru Govind Singh of the Punjab whom Hinduism can never forget. Their bravery was matchless. They were in no way inferior to Prithviraj or for the matter of that, to any other warrior in valour. True, they did not march large armies like Alexander or Hannibal. True, their name is not among great conquerors of the world. But they were the first great men who laid nationalism above their individual interests, for whom Hinduism was of supreme importance and who sacrificed all that was their own, for the solidarity of Hinduism. None before them had thought so much in the terms of nationalism, none before them had merged his individual self into that great national self. And

their success was by no means small. Not only that they died the death of a hero, they left behind them a strong current of nationalism which is working magic even now. Every drop of blood which they shed in the service of the country infused life into the nation. Even today their name sends forth a thrill in the hearts of the patriots. They died that Hinduism might live, they suffered that Hinduism might gain. And Hinduism has lived.⁹ Hinduism has gained.

CHAPTER III

PRE-DAYANAND PERIOD

Rana Pratap lived in the 16th and Sivaji and Guru Govind Singh in the 17th century of the Christian Era. Those were the hardest days for Hinduism. No doubt, Akbar the great contemporary of Rana Pratap was the wisest and mildest of Moslem rulers and his reign was a reign of toleration and progress. But his bringing into subjugation all Rajput states showed clearly whither the wind blew. While other Rajputs readily extended the hand of friendship to the Moslem Emperor, it was only Rana Pratap whose eye could penetrate into the dim future. He instinctively felt that a golden cage was being prepared for Hinduism. The question was not how Hindus were to be treated, the question was whether *Hinduism* would live. Akbar stopped the persecution of the Hindus. He allowed them religious liberty. He gave high posts to the Hindus. But the aim as well as the result of all this was that the roots of the Moslem rule went the deepest into the ground and Hindu-

ism suffered proportionately. This an ordinary man could not realise. Only Rana Pratap could see it. And he entered heart and soul into the matter. He hoped that even when he perished unsuccessful, warriors would rise from his ashes and would continue the work that he had so loved.

And warriors did rise. Siva and Gōvind who came a century after, must have taken a great inspiration from the memory of Pratap. The treatment of the successors of Akbar must have opened their eyes and convinced them that Pratap's fears were not groundless. The whole Hindu world felt the pinch and keenly too. The work that was done under the banners of Sivaji and Guru Govind was marvellous. It was they who undermined the Moslem power, it was they who opened new vistas of hope for Hindus.

But theirs was the work of warriors. They could re-establish Hindu states, they could remove the burden that was pressing the Hindus down. But they could neither diagnose nor remedy the evil diseases that were eating into the very vitals of Hinduism. They were Kshattriyas and could acquit themselves creditably well as such. To take away foreign yoke was one thing. To give

strength to the constitution itself was quite another. The remedy which was external, proved only superficial. They saw that Moslems were pressing down the Hindus and they tried to make the Hindus free from that pressure. But they could not find out why the Hindus were so weak as to come under Moslem sway. To study the internal forces that had made Hinduism weak was the task of a Brahman and a Brahman was required. By Brahman here I do not mean a caste Brahman as is supposed these days. Brahman in the true sense of the word means a learned man, of great acumen, a seer, a sage. During this period we find several such Brahmans trying to administer cures to diseased Hinduism and prolonging its life. They met with various amounts of success. Life did prolong. At least Hinduism could survive the crises. All thanks due to them. But the process of strangulation, however slow, could not be arrested. The patient was pining away though very slowly. The Bhakti movements inaugurated by Tulasī and Sur in the north and Tukaram and others in the south proved a great life-giving factor. But the solidarity of the Hindus could not be achieved. Before the patient was able to walk on his legs, new forces made their appearance and

pushed him back to his sick bed again

One such was Christianity First Christians came to India in the beginning of the 16th century Vasco de Gama was perhaps the first Christian who came to the court of Zamorin in 1498 Before this date, if any Christian was in India, he was too obscure to be taken notice of But the changes in the political condition of the country continued attracting more and more Christians, first in Madras and Bengal and later on in other parts of the country Akbar had several Christian Missionaries in his court and his successors also allowed some place to them But at first they were only casual visitors with no influence on the institutions of the country. In those days the predominant power was Moslem and the Hindus were in the background Naturally there was a tussel between the Moslems and Christians One glaring instance is the general expulsion of the Moslems from Goa and other places under Albuquerque and his successors Thus we find Christianity increasing till it became a menace to Hinduism In the interim that took place after the waning of the Moslem power, the Hindus did regain political power The rise of the Sikh power in the north-west and that of the Mahratta

power in the central and north India provided favourable chances to the Hindus and it was quite within their power to come back to their past glory. But they were, so to speak, ill-equipped for the arduous task, strength from within was wanting, pumping of power from without would not do. Social and religious evils that were left almost untouched by Pratap, Sivaji and Guru Govind and which it was not possible for Mahadaji Scindia or Ranjit Singh to handle, had already made Hinduism so weak that it again began to crumble before the new enemy.

The first serious effort to combat this evil was made by that great Bengali Patriot, Raja Ram Mohan Roy. His heart melted when he saw Christian Missionaries from Serampore and other centres making vilest attacks on Hinduism and not a finger being raised in their opposition. But his pangs must have been much greater when he found that so much diseased and foreign matter had crept into the system of Hinduism that it was not possible to parry any outside attack in this diseased condition. Raja Ram Mohan Roy had to fight a double fight—one with Christian Missionaries who were reaping their harvest right and left by playing upon the feelings of educated

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young men of Bengal and converting them totally or partially to Christianity, and the other with his own men, Hindu Pandits, who would not let him touch the diseased part. The whole of Orthodox Hindu Bengal was up against Raja Ram Mohan Roy when he tried to prove that idolatry and Suttee system had no sanction in the Vedas or other Hindu Shastras and that they were the innovations of a perverted age. The whole Christian power with newly educated Bengali youths on one side and the whole Hindu Orthodoxy and Pandits with load of Sanskrit learning lumbering in their head, on the other, Raja Ram Mohan Roy found himself in a very difficult position. The enemies of Hinduism alluring him to their side by their guiles and persuasions and the so-called friends of Hinduism, throwing stones where flowers were due, the Raja felt exasperated. How unfortunate it was that Raja Ram Mohan had to seek the aid of Christian Missionaries in getting the abolition of the horrible Suttee system in the teeth of the opposition of his own men.

He established the Brahmosamaj and died. At the time of his death, he was in England, on his political mission, as an agent of the nominal Moghal Emperor of Delhi. His profound learning

had elicited for him the admiration and respect of the British people. Christian Missionaries tried to befriend him and draw him nearer to themselves and their cause. A staunch Hindu and a true lover of Hindu religion, Raja Ram Mohan Roy must have felt keenly the sad fate of dying in a foreign land, so far from his own men and having his dead body buried according to Christian rites in obedience to the then existing restrictions of England. His tomb in Bristol is even today the producer of divers sentiments in a Hindu mind.

The aim of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in founding the Brahmo Samaj was to revive the old Vedic religion and to purge it of later excrescences. In his brief autobiographical sketch he says —

“The ground which I took in all my controversies was, not that of opposition to *Brahminism* but to a *perversion* of it, and I endeavoured to show that the idolatry of the Brahmins was contrary to the practice of their ancestors, and the principles of the ancient books and authorities which they profess to revere and obey” In the Preface to his translation of the Ishopanishat he says, “The most learned Vyasa shows, in his work of the Vedant, that all the texts of the Veda, with one consent, prove but the Divinity of that Being,

who is out of the reach of comprehension and beyond all description ”

How profound his love for Hindu culture was can be well imagined from the account of a dinner given to Ram Mohan in London, “It was rather curious to see the Brahman surrounded by hearty feeders upon turtle and venison and champagne, and *touching nothing himself but rice and cold water*”¹ We have already seen how Raja Ram Mohan Roy had to depend upon Christian Missionaries for the reforms he wanted to do in Hinduism. When a monstrous petition of the Pandits of Bengal was submitted to the British Parliament against the abolition of the Suttee system, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was present in England and it was through the intervention of his Christian friends that the application was rejected. The practice amongst the Kulin Brahmans of Bengal, of marrying several wives was also denounced by Raja Ram Mohan and this together with anti-idolatry campaign was sufficient to set the whole Hindu population of Bengal against this true friend of Hinduism. Natural it was on the part of Ram Mohan Roy to have some leanings

¹ Vide *Asiatic Journal*, August 1831, pp 236-237

towards Christian friends. He was totally against Christianity and had started a terrible literary crusade against this religion. But in the end when the question of educational reconstruction of India came, he sided with Macaulay in making English education compulsory. This he must have done under compulsion, a patriot as he was. He might have felt and naturally too that mere Sanskrit learning with its very narrow outlook was not sufficient to break the fetters of Hinduism or to remove its impurities.

The great mistake of Raja Ram Mohan was that he could not see through the game of Macaulay. Macaulay was at heart a fanatic Christian. He had a contempt for all oriental literature. He used to say that a shelf-ful of English literature was several times better than all the books ever written in Sanskrit language. Soon after the passing of the famous Education Act he wrote to a cousin of his exulting on his achievements and predicting through that measure the conversion of the whole of India into Christianity within the next thirty years.

The hopes that Macaulay entertained were not without reason. English education began and Vernacular declined. The whole outlook of the

nation was changed. It was favourable to Christianity. First of all English literature was already pervaded with Christian ideas. Secondly, the first teachers of English language were Christians. Their influence upon their young pupils' minds was natural. Kali Das and Bhavabhuti were replaced by Shakespeare and Milton. Six schools of Hindu philosophy were abandoned for the sake of Berkeley, Hume and Kant. Over and above these were Christian teachers whose personal contact with the youths of Bengal was unwashable. More than a decade before Macaulay, i.e., in 1817, Ram Mohan Roy with the help of an English Watchman David Hare had started the Hindu College. Carey, Marshman and Ward, three Baptist missionaries founded another College at Serampore. Besides missionaries all over India started English schools. With so many English schools and Colleges, English ideas could not but grow. And any attempt to check the surging tide failed.

The one great loss that English education did was the abandonment of indigenous literature and contempt for Hindu religion. At least the old faith was shaken. The strongest thing was that Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore who became the custodian of the Brahmo Samaj after Raja Ram

Mohan Roy's death, was persuaded to jettison the infallibility of the Vedas in 1845. This was not all. Gradually Brahmosamaj lost all attraction for Bengali youths and when a few years after Babu Keshava Chandra Sen came to the forefront he totally succumbed to Christian influence. A man of great learning and selfless character, Keshava Babu was a fascinating personality. His orations had a rare touch of magic. He was taller than the tallest of the Brahmos of his time. He infused new life into the slowly dying Brahmosamaj. He was very bold and extremely self-denying. He could sacrifice everything for his cause. But gods were jealous of him. They put into his disposition a little too much of sentimentality and we do not find in his nature that equilibrium which alone can set a programme before a great people. He dazzles but does not warm. He draws towards himself thousands but cannot keep them for a long time. If you draw a graph of his activities, you will not find it a straight line. A small thing is sufficient to change his course. It was perhaps this trait in his character that produced misgivings in the mind of Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore. It was a fit of sentiment in which he broke the sacred thread—a Hindu emblem of pre-historic traditions.

He read a book ('Ecce Homo' by Prof. Seely) on Christianity and he became so effected with it that without calculating the consequences he hastened to deliver a lecture on "Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia"—the lecture which created new hopes in the minds of Christian priests and corresponding disappointment in the mind of the Hindus. It was on this lecture that Mr Norman, a judge of the High Court introduced him to the Viceroy, Lord Lawrence and won for him a great fame not only in India but also in England. Keshava Babu realized his mistake, but too late. His subsequent lectures which he delivered by way of apology on "Great men", could not wash away the impressions which he had inadvertently made. There was nothing bad in the motives of Keshava Chandra Sen. He did nothing for his personal gain. The fault was of his sensitive nature and of the ingenuity of his brain which readily supplied him with fresh arguments whenever there was a turning point in his life. The first sight of Paramhansa Rama Krishna made him a Bhakta or mystic devotee, forgetting all the programme of Hindu reform with which had begun his life as Brahmo. His attitude towards idolatry was not the same after his contact with

Paramhansa Ram Krishna Maharaj, as it had been before. You find him dancing and singing in a Kirtan almost like a fanatic. Good or bad, these were his personal achievements and we are not going to make a critical survey of them. The only relevant point here is that Brahmosamaj under Keshava Babu did not remain that Hindu-reforming or Hindu-invigorating body which was the aim of its founder Raja Ram Mohan Roy. It became more or less a hotch-potch and in many points anti-Hindu, so much so, that at the time of passing Brahmo-Marriage Act, it had to declare its severance from Hindu connection. The prayer that Keshava Babu invented and gave to his followers was more or less eclectic. It failed to attract non-Hindus, nor could it appeal to Hindus. It was rather unfortunate.

CHAPTER IV

THE ADVENT OF SWAMI DAYANAND

Swami Dayanand was an approximate contemporary of Babu Keshava Chandra Sen. There was a difference of full one life's span between him and Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Geographically speaking there was a difference of East and West between the fields of their activities. There is a lot of distance between Gujerat, the birth place of Swami Dayanand and Bengal the home of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and this distance becomes much more considerable when we judge it from the viewpoint of the last century. The advantages of Railway, Telegraph,—let alone Aeroplane and Wireless—which Mahatma Gandhi enjoys these days were not allowed to those people

But thanks to the extensiveness of Hinduism there is a great kinship between Dayanand and Ram Mohan Roy. Both began their life with a chagrin towards idolatry. Both set to the study of Vedic literature with a firm and deep rooted faith in the

greatness of Hindu religion Both started a crusade in defence of Hinduism from Christian attacks The outlines of the programmes of both these great men were the same, the difference of details being immaterial Had Swami Dayanand been an immediate successor of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the Brahmo Samaj could have been a great force on the back of Hinduism. But Swami Dayanand was destined to be the fountain-head of a new force He carved his way independently In many respects Swami Dayanand was better fitted for his work Though a Sanskrit scholar Ram Mohan Roy could not go out of the common rut Swami Dayanand had the originality of his own Ram Mohan Roy tried to study the Vedas through his contemporary Pandits Swami Dayanand went several centuries back and rejected the traditional school altogether Ram Mohan Roy relied upon the existing commentaries of the scriptures Swami Dayanand freed himself from all the shackles and traced the sacred literature of the Hindus to its very source The difficulties with which we find Ram Mohan Roy struggling in his polemics against Christianity and in favour of Hinduism are not to be met with in case of Swami Dayanand Besides there was a difference of

attainments too. Swami Dayanand knew neither English nor Arabic. He had devoted all his life to sole study of Sanskrit. His ideas had no alien colouring. Ram Mohan Roy might have got his disgust for idolatry from his Christian friends. Swami Dayanand's chagrin for idol-worship was in the beginning intuitive and later on the result of his Sanskrit scholarship. Swami Dayanand never dabbled with politics. Ram Mohan Roy as a householder and in the capacity of an embassy of the Moghal Emperor must have had a need of mixing with all sorts of English men and it was natural for him to have his psychology changed. Then Swami Dayanand had one more advantage. In the four or five decades that elapsed after the foundation of the Brahmo Samaj, English education had spread far and wide and we could take stock of our gains and losses. Raja Ram Mohan Roy had hoped that English education would make the Hindus more rational and liberal. Swami Dayanand saw that this 'liberalisation' was another name for Christianisation. Not that English education was without its bright side. It brought the East and the West nearer. Science had made great strides in the West. It was at a great sacrifice that the people in the West were

engaged in unveiling the mysteries of nature. Old institutions of the West had undergone a thorough revolution. Old traditions had either vanished altogether or assumed quite a new shape. English education brought all these advantages to India. Indians had for centuries remained the frogs of a closed pond. Their outlook was deplorably narrow. That love for research, that open-mindedness which enabled the old Indian sages to build their magnificent literature had all gone. Conservatism of the worst type was occupying its place. Old order was not allowed to "yield place to new" and the once good system lay rotting. Railway, telegraph and other facilities of worldly life had proved to the Indians the utility of science and no conservatism of even the rigidest type could check the flood of new currents of thought which was forcing its way through several channels. Christian missionaries exploited this. They used weapons of science in demolishing Hindu superstition. The Hindu youths thought that Science and Christianity were the same thing. They were ignorant of the fact that the Bible was as full of unscientific superstitions and myths as the Hindu Puranas. A white Christian missionary taking advantage of his posi-

tion as a member of the ruling race, criticised in open market and very mercilessly too the legendary actions of Lord Krishna. He deftly withheld the truth that there were as many holes, perhaps many more, in the Christian coat too. Indians forgot the well-known proverb that all's not gold that glitters and Christians reaped a cheap harvest in Bengal as well as in Madras. The Hindus dwindled numerically as well as morally. Bengali Hindus gave up Shikha and Sutra both. Dr. Rajendralal Mitra, a Hindu of great learning and social eminence dealt to Hinduism a blow which even its worst enemy could not have done. He took the salient doctrines of Hinduism one by one, especially those which were the dearest to the Hindus, and proved them to be unauthorized on the basis of interpolated or mutilated texts of the Hindu Shastras. For example, beef-eating, drinking, burying the dead, are all regarded as dreadful sins in Hinduism and Hindus feel a horror about them. Christianity allows all the three. What Rajendralal Mitra did was that he proved on the strength of Hindu Shastras that the old Aryans ate beef, drank wine and buried their dead. This all easily contributed to the strengthening of Christian hands and weakening Hinduism. Worldly temptations on one hand

and disappearance of religious sanctions and moral restrictions on the other, eating and drinking of forbidden things became rampant

When Swami Dayanand opened his eyes and took up the work of Hindu reformation in his hand, he found himself surrounded by three enemies,—English education with all its glitterings leading to atheistic and materialistic advancement, Christianity and Mohammedanism making their steady encroachments on Hinduism and the last but by no means the least, the internal weaknesses of Hinduism itself, such as infant marriage, polygamy, forced widowhood, caste vanity and one thousand and one other superstitions. Infanticide had stopped by law. But superstitious mothers still dedicated their children to the goddess Ganges, by throwing them into the river. Slavery was not allowed. But the system of Devadasins in Hindu temples still flourished. Untouchability and its many horrid accompaniments took away thousands from the Hindu fold and thinned its ranks. These things were visible to all those who could see. Those at the helm of affairs fully realised that there was something vitally wrong with Hinduism. Times were ripe for change. What was wanted was a great personality that would take the initiative

and marshal the nation on the path of progress
This personality was Dayanand

In the middle of the nineteenth century great political changes had taken place in India. Old kingdoms or sub-kingdoms had crumbled away. The British Government was the paramount power. There was many a foot that felt the pinch of the foreign shoe. It was in 1857 that Mohammedans and Hindus both conspired to overthrow the British Rule and make India free. Swami Dayanand was then in full youth. He was not a weakling, nor was he devoid of patriotism. But it is very significant that we do not find even the remotest connection between Dayanand and any party that contributed to the struggle. Why did he not take any notice of that great bubble, the Bengal Mutiny? Did he not love the freedom of his country? Or was he lacking the zeal of a youth? Neither of these. What kept him aloof from all this passing phase was perhaps the conviction that as long as Hinduism had internal weaknesses, external remedy would not do. He had clearly seen that the political efforts of the Mahrattas and the Sikhs in reinstating Hinduism had all failed. And the cause was not the want of physical strength, but the presence

of internal weaknesses, which the Sikh and Mahratta potentates could neither detect nor cure. When the whole of India was in a sort of fever, Swami Dayanand was busy patiently studying Hindu scriptures and trying to find old remedies for new ills. Superficial patch-work would not satisfy him. Relapse of the disease from time to time was a clear indication that there was some deep-rooted cause, without removing which, nothing durable could be achieved.

CHAPTER V

DAYANAND'S PREPARATIONS

Hindu reformation was a self-imposed task of Swami Dayanand. When a mere boy, he was keeping a vigil in the Temple of Shiva. He saw a rat climbing over the image and concluded that the stone image was not the real Shiva. This set him athinking and was sufficient to turn his mind from idolatry. Some persons have ridiculed Dayanand's action in inferring such things from such a trifling event. They do not know the psychology of great men. There are many things that great men see and ordinary persons do not. Newton's famous deduction of the power of Earth's gravitation from such a trifling and common event as the fall of an apple is a clear illustration. And there is nothing strange or unnatural that Dayanand did so.

He was a man of very strong conviction. He tried to search the real Shiva (God) and left his house. He wandered from place to place in the search of truth. He knocked at all the doors

where there was some likelihood of getting his desire fulfilled. He was astonished to find that the famous custodians of Hindu Dharma knew nothing and merely deceived themselves and the world. He was disappointed. The pang was unbearable. But he persisted, till he came to Muttra. There a blind Sanyasin, Virajanand by name was running a small Sanskrit Pathshala. Young Dayanand had heard a great fame of Virajanand. He came and became his disciple. Dayanand's happiness knew no bounds when he found that at least there was one man in the world who could unlock the closed, rather jammed, door of Vedic literature. The blind Swami Virajanand had a great complaint against Sanskrit Pandits of his time. His finding was that the old Vedic literature had been all forgotten and its place was taken by the Puranas or spurious legendary books. He was himself anxious to do something for the revival of Vedic Dharma, but his physical inability was a stumbling block. To get a disciple of Swami Dayanand's penetration and will was simply a boon. He welcomed it, and helped Dayanand to the best of his power. Swami Dayanand drank deep at the fountain and was gratified to feel that a flood of new light had dawned upon him. His

heart was filled with hope and pleasure. He found, to his utter amazement that ancient Vedic literature had a mine of knowledge buried deep under the debris of present Hinduism, which alone, if unearthed, could save not only India, but the whole world from the ruin to which the world was precipitating. Some look upon it as mere credulity! They cannot be persuaded to believe that our past, however glorious it may be, is worth being brought back again. They do not want to go back. But "Back to the Vedas" was the cry of Dayanand. He had a strong conviction that the cycle of the world moved in a circle and that the salvation of people consisted not in receding from, but in imbibing again the pristine purity of the Vedic religion. In the Vedas, he found those elements of human progress, which the much advanced civilization of the present times utterly lacked. It was this strong conviction which helped him through all the austerities and penances that he underwent in studying Sanskrit. He had to labour very hard, so hard that perhaps a modernist would think it a waste of time and energy. What was the use of unearthing the long buried things? Sanskrit was a dead language and the civilization which it represented was longer

dead Archæological department might find some job, by way of curiosity, but not to impose it again upon the already advanced world. Swami Dayanand's views were just the opposite. He thought that no sacrifice was too dear for Sanskrit study.

One thing more. He was not satisfied with the study of Scriptures. A reformer needed something more. Mere knowledge of Scriptures would not do. Granted that he got all he wished to get from the study of the Vedas. How was he to preach it to others? How was he to face the tide of public opinion? That required *Tapa* or austerities, as it is *Tapa* that strengthens will and a strong will can achieve anything. T. L. Vaswani in his "Torch Bearer" says —

"Dayanand's dialectical powers were great but they were small compared to his will power and *tapasya*. In this regard I reckon him as greater than men like Aristotle or even Tolstoy of whom the world is rightly proud. Aristotle was a mighty thinker, but he had not disciplined his heart, he was not like Dayanand, like the great sages of India, a man of *tapasya*. I am lost in admiration at the profundity of Tolstoy's genius, but what a difference between Tolstoy the Reformer and Tolstoy the man! How one wished the great

Prophet of Russia had practised more what he so beautifully and sincerely preached Tolstoy was greater than Dayanand as an artist, but weaker than Dayanand in will-power and *tapasya*. Dayanand had wonderful control over his body." He then quotes a report of a reminiscence related by the father of Swami Mangalanand —

"I and three others with me decided to visit Dayanand at night. We reached the river bank at about 12 P.M. We saw Dayanand lying down by the bank of the Ganges awake. He wore only a loin cloth. He had no blanket on, even in that bitter cold. He lay on his bed of sand! When we arrived, he sat up. We said to him — Swami! it is very cold. How is it you don't feel it? He answered — You don't feel cold on your face! Remaining always exposed, it has become its nature to bear cold and never to feel it. So too, it has become natural for my body to bear cold without feeling it."

Then follows the comment of T. L. Vaswani — "Dayanand trained himself in a school of hardness. In simplicity was his grandeur, in *tapasya* was his strength, he became a *fakir* for the service of his race. Therefore has his work been blessed and his name endures. As I have read incident after

incident of his life, beautiful in *Brahmacharya* (ब्रह्मचर्य), radiant in sacrifice, I have recalled to myself the words of Laotze, the sage of China —

“Heaven endures and earth is lasting, and why can heaven and earth endure and be lasting? Because they do not live for themselves. On that account can they endure.”

Therefore the True man puts his person behind and his person comes to the front. He surrenders his person and his person is preserved. Is it not because he seeks not his own? For that reason he accomplishes his own.”

Tapasya was indeed Swami Dayanand's great preparation. He had a marvellous triumph over his passions. Not only did he observe a life-long celibacy—a thing extremely difficult*—but never fell victim to monetary temptations. Several times was he offered the headship of rich monasteries provided he gave up the opposition to image-worship. But he did not even pause to think about the offer. Often he would say, “Pray do not bind us fakirs with chains of gold.” Still greater was his love for truth. He had practised it at a great cost. Fame, that last infirmity of a great-man's mind, could not cause aberration in his case. Great as he was, he would admit his mistakes

in public, without any hitch and at the expense of his prestige. Truth was dearer to him than anything, name, fame or prestige.

Equipped with these weapons did Swami Dayanand leap into the arena of public service. It was with these equipments that he proposed to purify Hinduism and effect the revival of old Vedic Culture

CHAPTER VI

ORGANIC COMPACTNESS AND PACTS

One hears so much of pacts these days that the writer is tempted to allow himself a little digression. There are three conditions of a society and Hindu society has passed through all these. The first is *Organic* compactness. It is found in healthy organisms. In fact this is the sign of life and health. The best example of this is a just born healthy baby. Its body is made of different limbs, no two of them being the same, and yet they all adjust themselves to each other with marvellous perfection. The eye does not hear, the ear does not see, yet the eye and the ear both correlate their different functions of seeing and hearing in such a way that they are conducive to the growth of the whole organism. Every cell of a baby's body has a strong will to cooperate and remarkable efficiency to effect this cooperation. Then comes the stage of disintegration, a sort of slackening in this cooperation, an unwillingness on the part of different limbs to work for each

other This is the sign of decay or old age An old man has a much bigger hand than he had when a baby, he has bigger legs and bigger eyes, but that mysterious something which led to the cooperation of these limbs is dulled The body is precipitating towards its dissolution It is at this transitory stage, intermediary between full growth and complete decay that pacts have their play. They are meant to keep the parting limbs together They are a sort of glue that joins the separate things. The pages of a book have no organic relation between them. The book-binder has applied glue externally and as long as this external pressure lasts, so long lasts the pact of the pages There is no willingness on the part of the pages to come together or to remain together Extraneous circumstances have effected their conjunction. Not so a healthy organism There the pressure is from within Every living cell propels itself to meet its sister cell and to remain with it. The difference in the result is obvious These conditions we find in all societies, and the Hindu society which is our relevant point illustrates them remarkably There was a time of its healthy babyhood, when it was a growing organism. Its different parts tended towards the growth of each other

as well as of the whole. They were different and distinct in functions and forms, but their forms and their functions both, though as different and distinct, as an eye and an ear, and apparently having nothing common between them, marched together towards the same end, *i.e.*, the growth of the body politic. The Brahman with the Vedas under his arm-pit, the Kshatriya with a sword in his belt, the Vaishya with a purse in his pocket and the Sudra with none of these, and yet a will to be useful, worked so harmoniously well that neither they themselves, nor outsiders ever felt that they were different. These were the days of organic compactness. Then followed the period of disintegration—an unwillingness on the part of parts to work together or to remain together. The parts became parties. Jealousies and animosities took the place of harmony and cooperation. The Brahman became anti-Kshatriya and the Kshatriya anti-Brahman. The most typical of these was Brahman Parashu Ram, the incarnation of fury and rage who was ever ready to eat any Kshatriya raw. When the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas fought together, the Vaisyas and the Sudras were of no reckoning. They became degraded and humiliated. The limbs of the body politic being

rent asunder, the growth stopped and disintegration set in. It was at this stage that pacts became necessary. When foreign invasions took place, Hindus came together and offered whatever resistance they could. As soon as the outside pressure disappeared, they again fell out. If their resistance proved of no avail, the outside influence became too predominant and disintegration became more marked. Thus has the Hindu Society come down to the present pass, now rising, now falling, now joining, now parting, but always like the pages of a book and never like a growing organism. It is not that we never come together. We do join hands, but only when a foreign sword hangs over our head. This we can call pact but not organic compactness—union and not unity. Swami Dayanand realised this difference as nobody else before him had done and therefore the remedies he prescribed were also of different kind. It is our proposal to mention them briefly in the following chapters.

CHAPTER VII

FAITH

All good work needs strong will and strong will depends upon faith. If you have no faith and undertake a thing, you will do it feverishly. And faith and knowledge are inseparably connected. Most people think that faith can stand without knowledge. 'Blind faith' is a well known expression. Some hold that faith is always blind or what is not blind is not faith. But I do not share the view; in fact it does not stand psychological analysis. Those actions which are habitual or instinctive and where will does not appear to play any part are neither the instances of knowledge nor of faith. Even blind faith is blind simply because reason is absent, but knowledge is there. Strong faith means strong conviction, strong conviction means certainty of knowledge. Faith does not exist where there is doubt or ignorance. Whenever there is doubt, faith becomes shaky and leads to either inaction or feverish action.

The Hindus of yore had a firm faith in their

religion and philosophy Whatever they did for worldly or ex-worldly ends, was backed by the strong conviction about its truth The first chink made in the Hindu solidarity was a faint doubt about the convictions Learning waned and reasoning stopped Doubt was natural to come in And in the words of Lord- Shri Krishna "a man in doubt perishes" (संशयात्मा विनश्यति) A number of evils in religion and society both crept in, and destruction began Animal sacrifices in the *yajñas* as well as hundreds of other immoral practices were taking the very life out of Hinduism when Gautam Buddha and Mahavir appeared on the scene as saviours In order to ween people from apparently religious but really irreligious and non-vedic rituals both these great men criticised the Vedas and shook off the old faith Their attempts met with marvellous success and the Vedas were thrown overboard Buddhist and Jain systems were indigenous Old Aryan culture was permeated in their very blood So social structure did not undergo any revolutionary change But old faith was shaken to its very foundation, and the new faith that succeeded could not bring about the old equilibrium A number of philosophies sprang up, some confirming the old faith and

others denouncing it, but none being able to re-establish that firmness of conviction which is required for any permanent achievement. 'Being' and 'Becoming' were constantly at war. Our beliefs quaked like quicksilver. The worst feature of this age is our disbelief in our own existence or the existence of our surroundings. Nagarjun with his Nihilism or Shunyavad, Dingnag with his idealism, Gaudpada and Shankar with their Mayavad or theory of nescience, whatever the intrinsic merits of these philosophies, made the Hindus inattentive to their mundane affairs. A learned Hindu ate, drank and slept, but only because he could not do otherwise, in his heart of hearts he believed that he was really mimicking some Mithya or unreal drama. The world was a dream and he a dreamer. Not that the Hindu was forgetful of his self. To his credit it can be said that the Hindu had never been negligent of his individuality. Most wonderful systems of moral practices sprang up during Buddhistic and Jain predominance. A Bhikshu would take out his eye, because in his ramblings he happened to cast a sinful glance at a damsel. Kumaril Bhatta, another luminary of his age, would immolate himself on the slow burning fire of rice-husk, because he had deceived his

masters in the school. These deeds of self-expiation or atonement stand unparalleled in the history of mankind. But here we are not concerned with the merits or demerits of ethical systems. Here we look upon them from their social values. This abnormal emphasis upon the unrealities of life made the nation weak and disjointed. Extreme penances were possible only in the case of a selected few. Masses having no practical programme before them sank into deep ignorance and superstition. Learned Pandits would preach to them the subtle philosophy of eternal life while the homes of people were scenes of moral and physical dirt.

Such a life could not keep the nation from dissolution or defend it from foreign attacks. When Moslem invasions came and their conquests spread all over India, Hinduism got another shock. Moslem civilisation spread far and wide. Education of Arabic and Persian, which became indispensable for secular ends, left no time for Sanskrit studies. Heaps of books were written which criticised Hindu religion and Hindu morality. This went on for centuries. Christians in their turn only added to the further doom of Hinduism. When Swami Dayanand began to work, he found that educated

Hindus were Hindus by custom and not by faith. Their belief in the hollowness of Hinduism was almost complete.

The first important thing that Swami Dayanand has done is the re-establishment of faith in old Vedism. He waged terrible war against foreign faiths and foreign theories. He forwarded incontrovertible arguments. His polemics were strong and forceful. His mastery over discussions was amazing. He was in fact the first in this modern age that made the Hindus feel again ground under their feet. It is a famous saying that Hinduism which was hithertofore nicknamed as *Kachcha Dhaaga* or a slender thread and which would snap asunder at a small jerk became an iron rod of unprecedented strength. Christian missionaries who were accustomed to denounce Hinduism at the crossings of Indian markets were woefully non-plussed when an Arya boy would hurl against them the arguments learnt from Swami Dayanand's books.

Swami Dayanand has been badly criticised for his *Khandan* or counter-attacks. He has been called an intolerant fanatic. Even Hindus of great learning and high position have sometimes raised their voice against him and his followers. But

such persons forget that serious diseases need strong cures. Had Swami Dayanand been milder in his ways, he could not have achieved that which he has done now. Possibly he could have been more popular, had he avoided such discussions. His influence might have become wider. But the rationalistic recalling of the old faith was not possible. If you go deep into the Hindu mind of today, you will find that even those who do not want to give any credit to Swami Dayanand are full of new hopes. We have learnt to understand the limitations of modern civilization and begun to reverence our past better. We may not agree with Swami Dayanand in many details. But there is not the least doubt that the outlines formulated by him are not worth being brushed away in derision.

CHAPTER VIII

OTHER FAITHS

The firmness of our faith in Hinduism brings us to the question of our attitude towards other faiths. The Hindus are proverbially tolerant. No people on the face of the earth has ever allowed so much difference of opinion in its fold. Gautam Buddha who is known as anti-Vedic and anti-theistic has been given a prominent and reverential place among the ten Avataras or incarnations of God. Every Hindu is proud of his friendly attitude towards other religions. "Your religion for yourself and mine for me" is his guiding principle. As long as you leave a Hindu alone with his Puja Path (worship) and his scruples about dietary rules, he will say nothing to you. Even if you attack him and his books, he will keep silent and say, "It is your viewpoint." This the Hindu has been doing for centuries and to this attitude alone can be attributed the overwhelming predominance of other faiths and downtroddenness of Hinduism in its own home. The Hindu will not try

to convert anybody to his faith, because he believes that just as his own faith and his own religion are the most essential for himself, just so are other faiths and other religions to their followers. Even if a Moslem or a Christian comes to a Hindu Pandit and offers himself for conversion the Pandit makes a frank and flat refusal. He would say, "Why not cling to your own faith and get salvation thereby? It is quite possible." This total absence, or I should say, abhorrence of proselytising spirit on the part of the Hindus gave others a double advantage over themselves. Not only could Moslems and Christians reap a cheap harvest, they roamed unguarded too, as they did not fear that any Hindu could ever, even he were so eager, go back to his old fold. Eight or nine crores of Moslems whom you find these days brandishing their sword of fanaticism and forcing upon the people of Hindustan, their unreasonable and sometimes most absurd demands of stoppage of music before mosque, a right of cow slaughter and one thousand and one nonsenses, were not all willing converts to Islamic faith. In most cases they were the Hindu stragglers who accidentally and circumstantially found themselves somehow in touch with the Moslems and later on discarded

by the Hindus. It is thus that the ranks of the Hindus were thinned and are still getting thinner and thinner.

One fatal fallacy to which the Hindu mind has for generations fallen victim needs a special mention. The Hindu says that just as the centre is equidistant from all the points of the circumference of a circle, so is God from all religions, He being the centre of all. Everybody knows that other religionists do not entertain this view. Not that they are not Mathematicians, or that they do not know the properties of the circle. Not that the capacity of the Hindu for logic is in any way inferior, on many occasions you will find his hair-splitting tendencies carrying him to extremes. The fact is that in this respect the Hindu has been less practical. His mind has been moving in a circle. He is guilty of the fallacy of *petitio principii*. He first supposes, without any examination or any proof, that all religions are equidistant from God and then invents for himself the most delusive analogy that God is the centre, and all religions, the points of the circumference. Even an ordinary student of logic will see that he is begging the question. But such is the charm of this fallacy that even the most acute logician

among the Hindus cannot disillusion himself Lord Ronaldshey in his 'Heart of the Arya Varta' expresses his painful astonishment at the hold this fallacy has over the Hindu mind He put this question to several leading thinkers among the Hindus — What do you think about the truthfulness of other religions? They with one voice answered — "We hold that all religions are true" Lord Ronaldshey shakes his head in doubt and says that it is easy for him to see that all religions have some truth, without any truth whatsoever, they could not have lived so long, but he is unable to see, with so many internal and external differences — differences philosophical, fundamental as well as practical, that all religions are *equally true* The point is not that the existing religions have no truth, the point is whether they have *equal degree* of truth

It is not an academic question It touches our daily life It is of utmost practical importance. A Christian missionary believing the superiority of his faith over others can leave his home comforts and at a great sacrifice go to other lands for preaching He feels that he has something far superior to give and he must give it to those who have inferior faiths The Moslem has a firm belief

that his faith is the best and therefore he thinks that it would be undutiful on his part not to try to spread it among non-moslems. But our Hindu brother believes that other religions are as true as his own, why should he carry coal to New Castle? Who would care to make sacrifices for clothing the already clothed or feeding the already fed? The very incentive that could goad the missionaries of other religions to go to other peoples, ~~and~~ give them the message of their sublime faiths is wanting in the case of a Hindu. Little wonder that Hinduism got contracted, and contracted till it lost all its importance and influence in the world.

Swami Dayanand saw the defect and at once set to remove it. He was the first modern Indian who claimed that not only is the Vedic religion the oldest, but at the same time the best and most perfect. In his book Satyarth Prakash he has dwelt at a great length on this point. His position is that all other religions have sprung from or upon the ruin of the Vedic religion and are thus either one sided or incomplete. He exhorts Hindu Pandits to rise to the occasion, put the excellent points of their religion before the world and convert all those that may be willing, to their

point of view as well as religion. Swami Dayanand has quoted a verse from the Yajur Veda in support of his missionary spirit —

दयेन वाच ब्रह्मणीमावदानि जनेभ्य ।

ब्रह्मराज्यान्दा धृ इन्द्राय चाव्ययि च स्वाय चारणाय ॥

“Just as I have given this beneficial knowledge to you just so it is your duty to transmit it to others whether sages, warriors, serving class, trading class or even the lowest.” (Yajur Veda 26/2)

It is generally believed that Hinduism has never been a proselytising religion, Swami Dayanand forcibly refutes this view. He quotes a verse from the Manusmriti which says —

एतदेव प्रमुक्तस्य सकाशादग्रजन्मन ।

स स चरित्र शिक्षेत् पृथिव्या सर्वमानव ॥

“It was from the Brahmin born in India, that all the people in the world learnt their respective cultures”

How grand, how patriotic! and how true! There was a time when the Hindus were great teachers. They went abroad, colonised different parts of the earth and implanted there their civilisation. The marks of their civilisation are found not only in the neighbouring islands of Java and Bali but also in distant parts of Mexico and North

America. Some hold these as vain assertions and we do not propose to deal with them here. But it is a historical truth, not controverted in any quarters that Buddhist section of the Hindus was the most proselytising Buddhist Bhikshus over-ran Ceylon, Burma, Tibet, China, Japan, Turkistan and Asia Minor and made the people of these countries Buddhists. It is a good news that Buddhist preachers have again organised themselves and have restarted the long forsaken work of proselytisation. Those sects of Hinduism which express their disgust at this aspect of their activities forget that had there been no proselytisation, their religion would not have been born at all and without proselytisation it cannot live longer. Once the writer put to a Lingait in Southern India a question, "Can you convert me to your religion?" The gentleman said, "No, we do not convert." Then he was cross-questioned, "Did the originator of your religion convert?" "Of course, he must have, otherwise how could the religion spring up?" "Then why do not you follow his example?" The answer was too difficult. But habit is habit. It is responsible for good many evils. We do not want to change. And the result is that these *Lingaits* and *Jains* are fast dying sects. I see the

same thing with Parsis I have had a talk with different Parsis on this point Many Parsis have become Christians Their ranks are thinning There is no lack of learning, wealth, patriotism or business shrewdness among the Parsis Yet all their learning, all their intelligence, all their shrewdness put together cannot make up for one deficiency Their faith is perhaps the nearest to Hinduism and if the Parsis join hands with the Hindus, and make a common cause they can resuscitate the old Vedic culture and save humanity from the clutches of Anti-Vedic barbarism But what is the weakness of the Hindus is also the weakness of the Parsis In one respect the Parsis are still worse Being a very small community of intelligent and active persons, they have taken to European ways Their love for Zoroastrianism is only nominal They are in a grip of materialism and have almost merged their entity into Westernism

It is fortunate that partly due to political causes and partly owing to religious awakening, the Hindus have waked up from a long slumber and have begun to realise that proselytisation is not only legitimate and allowed by the Shastras, but also very very necessary for their longevity Swami

Dayanand goes further. He says that it is a sin not to proselytise. What right have you to deprive anybody of sunlight? And what right have you to deprive anybody of Vedic culture? Is not the Vedic lore a great blessing from God? And have we not sinned against God by keeping the lamp of Vedic knowledge under a bushel?

Old Hindus feared that the incoming of Moslems and Christians in their fold would alloy Hinduism and modify its purity. It is why the first conversions evoked a tremendous opposition against the Arya Samajists. But constant and continued hammering has caused the pendulum of thought to oscillate to the other side. Even the most orthodox Hindus have changed their views and they thank Swami Dayanand for having brought about this change. Some sects of Hinduism have gone even so far as to raise the cry of Pan-Hinduism. They have gone to foreign lands and made their temples there. In England there is a *math* or monastery of Gauri-Math newly built. Preachers go there and try to prepare field for conversion. Swamis Vivekanand and Ram Tirth went to America and Japan and made several their disciples. This has rused the prestige of Hinduism in the eye of the world. It does not mean that

we disrespect other religions It simply means that we respect our own the most And if you are wanting in this last named thing, surely you are unfair to yourself and have no right to live

CHAPTER IX

IMAGE WORSHIP

Idolatry or image worship as it is named by refined persons, is the apparent characteristic of Hinduism. For Mohammedans and Christians a Hindu means an idol-worshipper. They cannot imagine Hinduism without idolatry. Nor can ordinary Hindus think that they can do without image-worship. Swami Dayanand was reviled the most for denouncing idolatry. They were ready to tolerate anything of his, if he but compromised with image-worshippers. It is believed in some quarters that Swami Dayanand opposed idolatry simply to overcome Christianity. But they forget that it was the first and last thing for Swami Dayanand. It sounds strange in some ears that Swami Dayanand was only one out of many Aryan sages that raised their voice against idolatry. Swami Dayanand's first discovery was that the Vedas did not inculcate polytheism or image worship. In fact the gods and goddesses which form the Hindu Pantheon have no mention in the Vedas. Even

in later literature we do not find their traces, till we come to the Buddhistic or Pauranic age. Anagarika Dharm Pal the great Buddhistic missionary of the twentieth century has traced the Persian word *but* (بوت) meaning an idol to the Sanskrit word Buddha, as the images of Buddha were worshipped in Persia or other countries of Western Asia

We do not discuss here the efficacy of image-worship as a means of the realisation of God. Many persons look upon the question from different angles. We might have totally ignored this subject in this book. But it has a certain bearing upon the question of Hindu solidarity and we cannot help touching it in passing.

Image worship is found in some forms among Christians and Mohammedans too. Christendom is full of images of saints and angels, even of Christ and his mother Mary. Mohammedans do not think it a sin to bow before the Tombs. The *Sijda* (سجدة) or form of prayers current among the Mohammedans is no more than a remnant of the practice of bowing before the idols of gods and goddesses, in vogue in Arabia before the advent of Mohammad. The Prophet took away idols, while the form remained the same. Yet we must admit that Mohammad realised the harm which idol-worship does to a

nation. All Christian reformers and prophets raised their voice against idolatry John Wycliff, Calvin and Luther all denounced idolatry with all the strength at their command

The reason is not far to seek If you study the mythology of any nation, you will find that idolatry is the vilest force that produces disintegration in any people It is difficult to keep one uniform idol All idols are either imaginary representations of the maker or the statues of saints, and demigods or deified personages Different people imagine differently and there are natural jealousies and competitions between different forms One saint appeals more to one set of people and another to another This also leads to differences, till people come to blows Saints and gods play the role of feudatory chiefs who throw the yoke of one paramount power and begin to fight among themselves for their own supremacy Religious history of the world is black with these bickerings The tomb of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem was the cause of most terrible warfare between Moslems and Christians Christ is said to have been a prince of peace He is given the credit of shedding his very blood for the sake of mankind But look at the irony of fate People fighting together like beasts

over the bricks which once contained the bones of this Peace-maker—bones which natural forces must have long turned into dust

Such wars were not uncommon in India. We very narrowly escaped a war between the two clans of Gautama Buddha's adherents over the question of his corpse. The Hindu Puranas are full of accounts of battles that took place between gods and their followers. Different cults have different presiding deities and they are constantly at war. The images of the Jains and the images of the Hindus cannot tolerate each other. The old Hindu saying that 'never go to the Jain Temple, even when you are between a mad elephant and it' is a sufficient indicator of the mentality. The small village of the present writer has a few Jains and their Temple. He remembers how the Jain procession and the Jain idol were the subjects of constant bickerings, though on secular occasions the village-folk behaved quite friendly.

The upholders of idolatry have often tried to philosophize upon the practice. They say that image worship is quite separate from mythology. It is nothing but symbolisation of abstract virtues. Human mind is so weak that it cannot concentrate

upon abstract ideas. It must have concrete object before it. Image-worship might have sprung in the beginning with this idea. But history tells us that it is not always the case. Most images are of heroes, human or divine. In some cases, very few indeed, symbolisation has also played the same part. As to an instrument of meditation, it is only an ingenuity of shrewd brains, not corroborated by history or practice. No idol, in any country or among any sects of any religion, is ever used as a medium of meditation. 'Even those orders of yoga, which advise black spots or some such contrivances for bringing mind to one-pointedness, never use idols. An idol is too gross for this purpose. But if you use it as a symbol, it proves pernicious in the long run. Similes and metaphors so very common in human language, when reduced to painting always miscarry. I shall give here one illustration. 'Ranjit Singh was the lion of the Punjab' is a common saying. Even a boy understands its meaning. He knows that the sentence mentions the unusual, lion-like bravery of the Sikh leader. But if you reduce the idea to painting and put a lion on the map of the Punjab, you would naturally give paws, nails, tail and other features of the lion, otherwise it will be no lion at all. This

figure of the lion will surely take you very far from the sense conveyed by the verbal sentence. The sentence helps you *to abstractise*. The figure forces upon you gross *concretisation*. Thus the poet who thought out the simile and the painter or the sculptor who tried to vivify it are apparently complementary but really contradictory. Symbolisation, when in the hands of painters and sculptors has always proved misleading, especially in the case of ignorant masses for whom it is mostly prescribed. We too often hear the plea that idolatry is meant for ignorant masses as they cannot grasp abstract things. Swami Dayanand has strongly criticised this argument and he is right. It is the ignorant masses that suffer the most from this prescription. Instead of giving some relief, it has always increased the disease and has led ignorant people to still abjecter ignorance. Idolaters are always satisfied with their lot. They look upon ignorance as knowledge, and darkness as light. They feel consoled where there ought not to have been any consolation.

But there are more dreadful accompaniments of idolatry. The most fatal of them is superstition. It makes people extremely timid. Even great warriors who would jump from a mountain

top or rush into the mouth of a cannon begin to shake like an aspen leaf when an imaginary fear from some god or goddess takes them into a grip. It is this weakness, which has been very often exploited by political enemies through oracles or animal sacrifices. The Oracle of Delphi in Western Asia and Oracles of goddess Kali or Durga in India are not unknown to historians. In Rome and Greece, animals sacrificed at the altar of a god, or a goddess, especially in the beginning of a battle, often changed the mentality of the fighters. In India many important battles were lost, simply because the brave Rajputs had their valour neutralised by superstitious idolatry.

It is a question whether idolatry has helped anyone in securing heaven. But it is undeniable that in India, as well as elsewhere, idolators have been so duped as to lose even their earthly belongings. Hindu history is full of such instances. Mahmud of Ghazni's sack of Somnath was not due to the cowardice of the Rajputs. Had not brave Dahir's people been misguided by superstitious priests, the history of Hinduism today would have been quite different. Just imagine the horrors of bloodshed, arson, loot and slavery that followed the sack of Somnath. And just

try to trace it to superstitious idolatry. It the image of Somnath that called Mahmud He felt tempted to come and break it. The priests hoped that the image would help them. It was idolatry that made them over-confident. Instead of relying upon the strength of their arms, idolatrous Rajputs depended upon the vain hopes raised by the priests. The result was disastrous. Kashi or Benares, the famous citadel of Hindu idolatry is a living testimony to the dreadful result of idolatry. The idol Vishvanath jumps into the well when the fanatic Moslems attack the temple and the wily priest in order to keep the ignorant masses in his clutches invents the plea that Vishvanath does not like to see the face of the Rakshashas. Such fibs are possible only among idolatrous people. If you minutely study the daily life of common people, you will find horrible instances of harms being constantly perpetrated by a host of Pandits, priests, astrologers and divines whose mainstay of life is offerings of the temple. A living earned at the expense of the nation should never be permissible.

It is these considerations that led Swami Dayanand to condemn idolatry so vehemently and much of the disintegration of Hindu Society

can be easily remedied if idolatry is given up.

There is one more aspect which is worth noting. Idols invite the rage of the enemies too easily, and when any harm is done to these idols, the faith of the devotees is shaken and they become weak. Histories of many old nations which were given to idol-worship provide sufficient instances in corroboration. If a Mohammedan fanatic is successful in breaking any idol, the worshipper who had supposed it a very mighty agency and had relied upon its help, naturally becomes sceptic and grows weaker. Christian missionaries in several cases could make easy converts among those people whose gods and goddesses they could successfully defy.

CHAPTER X

CASTES AND UNTOUCHABILITY

Caste system is perhaps the worst enemy of Hindu solidarity. No nation has ever been so divided as the Hindus. Caste prejudices and caste jealousies are too notorious to need a long discussion. The anti-untouchability campaign started by Mahatma Gandhi is ringing in the air.

The first voice raised against caste system was of Gautam Buddha. It was twenty-five centuries ago. During the two or three centuries that followed, Buddhism became the dominant religion in India. But we do not find any signs of total extinction of either caste or untouchability. The feeling might have been suppressed for a time, but it was never buried so deep as not to be able to raise its head again. In Swami Dayanand's time it was the worst and he tried to give his closest attention to the problem.

But there is a marked difference between Swami Dayanand and other reformers. Swami Dayanand is an Indian and his brain is thoroughly Indian in

every sense of the term. His diagnosis is different and his cures are also different. The disease is indigenous and he prescribes indigenous remedies for it. Such is not the case with others. Go to any shop of a druggist in India and you will find it packed up with foreign medicines. Our doctors are up-to-date Europeans not only in dress and fashion but also in language, style, medicines and instruments. In most cases our raw Indian medicines have to travel a long distance and come back metamorphosed and Europe-labelled before they are considered efficacious.

As with medicines so with reforms. If you wish to cure any social evil, you must go to Moscow, or Berlin or London or Paris. Study any social movement at present and you will find in it a domination of European thought. This aspect of events is not without its glimmer. It has advantages of its own. Mental exclusiveness is very injurious to the uplift of any fallen nation. The West is no doubt very progressive. And there is no reason why we should not take advantage of its institutions.

But there is a dark side of the picture too. The modernised Indian is too slavish. He throws overboard his jewel and runs after foreign trash.

The very foreignness of a thing attracts him. He has no means to consult his own sages. He has forgotten the language of his forefathers. He has lost the key that would unlock the old Indian treasure. He is totally at the mercy of the foreigners.

It is this slavery from which Swami Dayanand tried to save us. We have seen that Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a precursor of Swami Dayanand. He had anticipated many items of Swami Dayanand's programme. But somehow he does not seem to have touched the question of caste. The polygamy of Kulin Brahmans did attract his attention. But that was only one aspect. Keshava Chandra Sen did more work in this line. He was himself a non-Brahman. His religious leadership must have been resented by orthodox Brahmans and their opposition might have driven Keshava Babu to the other extreme. But partly due to Christian tinge and partly owing to the indefiniteness of the programme, the Brahmo-Samajists of Keshava Babu's following soon found themselves cut off from Hinduism and their best intentions remained unfulfilled. The back wag-gons of Hinduism could not follow the too fast engine of Brahmoism and were naturally

left behind.

Swami Dayanand's eye was keener. He saw the disease and the cause of the disease too. He traced the caste-system to its very origin and tried to detect where the mistake lay. Vedic scriptures told him that the four Varnas mentioned therein were only natural divisions of a Society on the basis of merit and functions, and thousands of castes and sub-castes (about 3000 by rough calculation) which are found these days have nothing in common with those Varnas. The most unfortunate thing is that the existing castes of the Hindus have apparent kinship with the four Vedic Varnas. If you just consult those caste people, you will find that you can easily classify them into four big categories of Brahman, Kshattriya, Vaishya and Shudra. There are about 1800 or more sub-castes all calling themselves Brahmins and other castes recognising themselves as such. Then there are Kshattriyas, Jats, Gujars, Thakurs, Rajputs, besides a few others such as Jaiswalas, Kayasthas, and many others whose claim to Kshattriya-hood is of recent origin, and often questioned by older Kshattriyas. The same case is with Vaishyas and Shudras. The last named includes hundreds of sub-castes and deputy-castes some of which are touchable menials and others

untouchables There are certain Shudra castes which are not menials and follow honourable professions, such as oil-pressing, weaving, clay-pottery, etc., still, being dubbed as Shudras they are regarded as inferiors. The untouchables have different grades of untouchability which it is not easy to define, much less codify and which only local customs can exactly ascertain Apparently all these castes have some remote reference to the duties and privileges reserved for the four Varnas in the Vedas or in the Manus. But one thing peculiar has crept in. These castes and sub-castes depend upon the birth and not upon merits or professions and are therefore water-tight and untransferable. It is this birth-factor which is responsible for such backwardness of the Hindu Society. The following defects are very patent —

1. A Brahman's son must be a Brahman, a Jat's Jat and so on, irrespective of his attainments or professions

2. He must marry in his own fold

3. He must inter-dine in his own fold and can eat food touched by specified castes only, for this, there are elaborate arbitrary rules

4. Change of caste is not permissible.

5. Violation of rules about dining or marriage

invariably causes ostracism, which gives rise to new castes or sub-castes.

The first three castes, namely Brahmans, Kshattriyas and Vaishyas could not keep to the professions meant for the three Varnas Panikkar rightly observes that "while the inequality of birth and the prohibitions in regard to marriage continue with undiminished force, the attempt to confine castes to separate professions seems never to have succeeded. The earliest available literature gives instances of Brahmans carrying on the profession of medicine and arms and administration. In the Jatakas the Brahmans are mentioned as traders, hunters and trappers. Masani quotes the case of a Kshattriya prince, Kusa, mentioned in Jataka tales who became an apprentice by turn under a potter, basket-maker, florist and cook."¹ But the restrictions have been very very rigorous in case of Shudras and untouchables. A Brahman can keep a cloth-shop. But a sweeper must remain a sweeper. He is denied, by force, all chances of education and moral or industrial betterment.

The loss which this accursed caste-system

¹ *Hiranyam and the Modern World* by K. M. Panikkar.

has done to the Hindu Society is as follows —

1 It has deprived a large number of Hindus of the chances of education and betterment

2. It has deprived Hinduism of the services of those who have got germs of improvement, which die out for want for nurture

3 It has made higher classes vain and ignorant and the positions occupied by them are ill-equipped and ill-functioned

4 It has shut the door of competition and given rise to class jealousies and animosities

To be fair there is another side of the picture also. Sir S Radhakrishnan, while speaking of the fourfold division of the Varnas says that "it illustrates the spirit of comprehensive synthesis characteristic of the Hindu mind with its faith in the collaboration of races and the cooperation of cultures"¹ Mr. K. T. Paul in his *British Connection with India* deals with another aspect "So subtle and intangible as scarcely to reveal its power over its own members so long as there is no transgression, the Hindu social system has been through the centuries the most potent in holding every individual to his social obligations, religious duties as also to his economic

¹ *Hindu View of Life*, p 93

and civic responsibilities To it is, due the perfection in craftsmanship brought about by a process of apprenticeship from father to son through perhaps two hundred generations To it is due the protection of the widow and the orphan, the aged and the infirm, the under-privileged and the 'handicapped. To it is also due the steady pursuit of knowledge and culture through these classes who were, so to say, told off to devote themselves exclusively to it as students and teachers Caste has large dark blots in its scheme and is to-day happily undermined to its foundations But India owes all that is her distinctive identity almost exclusively to the protection afforded by caste and by its unchallengeable potentiality for good"¹ .

Nobody can deny that the caste-system has played an important part in keeping the distinctive identity of Hinduism against the inroads of the Moslems and the Christians But Swami Dayanand's view is that this identity could have been much better kept, had not the defect of birth-basis vitiated the whole system The Vedas, and therefore Swami Dayanand, emphasize the fourfold division of society It is but natural The meta-

¹ Vide *Panikkar's Hinduism*, p 45

phor that the Brahmins, the Kshatriya, the Vaishya and the Shudra are the head, the arms, the thighs and the feet of the society is so very natural and so very appealing. No society in the world has prospered without any such division. Plato while advising the threefold division into wisdom-lovers strength-lovers and appetite-lovers (or ease-lovers) had the same principle in view and if his scheme failed, it was due to his idiosyncratic details and want of traditional background. The Hindus while wallowing in several reprehensible weaknesses could hold on to the good points of the tradition. But the greatest defect of the system as pointed out by Swami Dayanand is that due to the ignorance of Vedic knowledge, the division based upon merits and potentialities, has been wrongly established upon birth. A Brahmin's son may be a Brahmin or may not. Not that the Brahmin is the head of the society, but that the head of the society is Brahmin, not that the Kshatriya is the arm of the society, but that whoever functions as the arm of the society is the Kshatriya, not that the Vaishya is the thigh of the society, but that whoever functions well as the thigh (middle part) of the society should be called a Vaishya, not that the Shudra is the feet of the society, but that whoever by merit

and function is the lowest in position should be regarded as the Shudra

The difference between Swami Dayanand and other modern reformers is that while the latter want to do away with caste-distinctions altogether the former advises to abolish all sub-castes and to reshuffle the four divisions on the basis of merit and functions. It means that Swami Dayanand makes caste or Varna a changeable thing. At present the foundations of the caste-system have undoubtedly been shaken. The question is to whom the credit is due. Some hold that political changes are responsible for this. It may be so. But Swami Dayanand's crusade against birth-basis of castes and in favour of merit-basis of the Varnas, has one beauty in it, it keeps intact our faith in Hindu religion and old Hindu scriptures. Gautam Buddha did raise his voice against castes, but his heterodoxy being unacceptable to the Hindus the evils of the caste-system also came back when the Vedic religion was reinstated in the form of Pauranism. Some politically minded thinkers hope that politics is strong enough to sweep away anything before it, but those who can see the subtle forces at work underneath the surface do feel the need of giving a broad religious base

to Hinduism and keeping intact the old outlines, by purging it of only excrescences. Swami Dayanand is of this latter type. In his scheme of things the fourfold division remains and untouchability and its one thousand and one accompaniments go off. He throws open all chances of competition for all. He does not impose any restrictions on education. For him every child has a birthright to receive education and be good. But he does not say that all men are equal, whether good or bad, wise or foolish, learned or ignorant. In the system of Varnas untouchability is out of question. Food restrictions also go off because it is the Shudra's business to cook and not the Brahman's. The Arya Samajists were perhaps the first to begin inter-dining and doing away with arbitrary rules of food-preparing and food-taking.

As regards marriage, Swami Dayanand does not advocate a sweeping change. On this point he is rather punctilious and does not carry the modern young man with him. For him marriage is not a sentimental affair, but the grim foundation on which the whole social superstructure rests. While he denounces strongly the present rigidity of the arbitrary restrictions of caste for marriage he wishes that there should be some social check

upon people running riot in this respect First of all the Varnas should not be determined by birth but by merit, secondly there should not be an intermixture of Varnas for marriage This is a problem for eugenics and I do not propose to discuss it further Yet one thing is clear The present caste-system, of which the birth in a certain family (mind, not heredity) is the only criterion must go and immediately too It is not, and should not be a part of Hinduism On this point the following two quotations will do —

“The seers of the early Vedic period know nothing of caste’ Delve as much as one may into the literature of the period, one discovers only classes, not castes The elements which go to form castes were however there so that gradually a gulf was created between one order and another For a long time, however, the conception of social segregation and untouchability was repugnant to the genius of the people who sought unity in variety and dissolved variety in unity Each class was regarded as an integral part of the fabric of society”¹

¹ “Caste and the Structure of Society” by R. P. Masani
—Legacy of India, p. 132

"If the Vedas provide no authority for the caste-system, in what way is it connected with religion?" It is true all Hindu law takes caste for granted, all the Puranas assume the existence of caste and look upon it as divinely ordained. But where is the authority for this theory of the Divine Ordinance of caste? True, the *Gita* declares: "Chātūr varnyam mayā Sṛṣṭam Guṇākarma vibhāgaḥ". But clearly that statement of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is an attack on the basis of Hindu caste-system, and not its justification. The literal meaning of Kṛṣṇa's words is, "I created the fourfold society *on the basis of quality and action*". It is the most unequivocal repudiation of the divine origin of caste-system based on birth, the most categorical denial of the Brahmanical claims of inherent superiority. No one denies that even in classless societies, life has to be organised on the basis of *guṇa* (quality) and *karma* (action), but the idea that Hindu religion gives sanction to inequality based on birth seems to be untrue on the face of this statement in the most sacred of all Hindu texts outside the Vedas, and the Vedas as we have seen give no justification to the theory either."¹

¹ Panikkar's *Hinduism*, pp 27-28

This is, in nutshell, the view which Swami Dayanānd was first to put before the public and for which he and his followers have been fighting all these decades. It is very gratifying that what appeared only an innovation of an ingenious brain in the beginning, is now held as an admitted fact by all reasonable persons.

CHAPTER XI

WOMANHOOD

Womanhood is as much indebted to Swami Dayanand as any other section of mankind. And this debt will be much more appreciated if, some light is thrown on the influence which Swami Dayanand's ideas have been invisibly exercising on the public mind, especially on the Hindu mind.

In human economy man and woman are inseparably connected. Plebeians and patricians, serfs and lords, Brahmans and untouchables can do without one another, but males and females are literally two halves of one unit called man. It is impossible to think of one without the other. Yet there has always been something unfortunate with womanhood. 'Lover' and 'beloved' are two well known words of English vocabulary, one being used for man and the other for woman. Other languages have also their equivalents. But nobody has ever suffered so much as this '*beloved*' at the hands of her '*lover*'. It has been a general complaint, from time immemorial, that woman-

hood has occupied a much inferior position in the human society. You can well judge it by the etymology of the two English words 'lord' and 'lady' which are used these days as marks of a very high distinction for man and woman. 'Lord' was originally Anglo-saxon hlāford from hlāf=bread and weard=a ward or one who distributed bread to his men, literally *anna dātā* (अन्नदाता). But 'lady' is Anglo-Saxon hlāf=bread plus *dige*=kneading or one that kneads flour and turns it into bread. The old English *dey* is equivalent to maid-servant from which the present English word 'dairy' has come. Do our 'ladies' know what the word which they so prize, originally meant?

Swami Dayanand found that Hindu woman was no exception to the general rule. Her position was very inferior in the household. She was jealously kept in Purdah, i.e., not allowed to come out. Whenever she would come out, she must cover her face with a long veil, which meant that her five gates of knowledge, four important ones of which happen to be located in the face should be shut up. Knowledge was not considered necessary for them. It was rather supposed to be dangerous. 'स्त्रीशूद्रौ नाधीयाताम्' ("Let no woman and Shudra be taught") was the favourite formula

of Sanskrit Pandits. Even if any Pandit would choose to educate his daughter, in exceptional circumstances of course, he would never persuade himself to commit the horrible sin of teaching her any part of the sacred Vedas. She, though his dear daughter, was after all a woman and *qua woman* she was too impure to be introduced to the sacred lore. Out of hundreds of thousands of the Pathshalas, not a single one was meant for girls. Such were the ideas of the Hindus about their mothers, sisters, wives and daughters. And they were translated into practice with a great rigour. A man could marry any number of wives according to his means or inclination, they were no more than *dasis* (दासी) or maid-servants. The Kulin Brahmans of Bengal were notorious for this pernicious practice. One Kulin Brahman would marry scores of wives and leave them at their fathers' homes without any further liabilities on himself. He would charge a heavy dowry at the time of the marriage, and afterwards would visit his father-in-law's house only on rare occasions and that too to receive presents. In other parts of the country, the affairs were not so hard. But the dowry system did prevail and was a veritable curse to the parents of the girl. The greatest

curse was to have a daughter. It is but natural that under such circumstances the whole family went in mourning at the birth of a female child. If there were many daughters born, it meant utter ruin to the family.

A wife's death did not mean much to the family. The widower could take a fresh wife the very next day, and perhaps with dowry too. Offers were sometimes made during the very life of the diseased wife. And if the husband was dead, the widow of even 5 years of age was consigned to eternal doom. Early marriage which was the fashion of the day, would turn even a one-year old child a widow, such widows were not few. Even now the disease is lingering as is evident from the census report. Women had, besides the above, other disabilities too, and the worst thing was that they had no capacity to realise their position.

Swami Dayanand was shocked at this condition of womanhood, but it was his happy surprise to find that this inferiority of the woman was not sanctioned by the Vedas. When he studied Vedic literature he saw that the old Vedic religion looked upon the woman as an honourable co-mate of the man and the woman of Vedic times enjoyed a very respectable position in the society. Bhavabhuti's

famous line गुणा पूज्यस्थान न तु लिंग न च वय ("merits are to be worshipped, neither sex, nor age") was equally applicable to all, whether man or woman

When Swami Dayanand preached that the doom of womanhood was only an innovation of the degenerated Hindu period and that in the eye of the Vedas man and woman were both equal for all social purposes, whether in respect of marriage, inheritance or other rights and duties, the orthodoxy was up in arms against him. In his famous work *Satyarth Prakash*, he has discussed the point at great length and given numerous quotations from the Vedas and other sacred books to show.—

1. That women should be as much educated as men.¹

2. That every girl has a right to wear the sacred thread and undergo the initiatory ceremony

¹ इद मत्र पत्नी पठेत् "Let this verse be read by the wife" (Shrut Sutra)

अथ य इच्छेत् दुहिता मे पण्डिता जायेत सर्वमायुरियात् ।

(शतपथ १४-२-४-१६)

"Whoever wishes that his daughter be learned and attain full life and etc etc" (Shatapath Brahman 14-2-4-16)

of Yajñopavit as her brother¹

3 That she should not be married in her minority and *never without her will*²

4 That after marriage she has the same privileges in her new family as any other male member³

5. That the happy family is only that wherein women are respected and that family is soon ruined

¹ ६ वें वर्ष के आरम्भ में द्विज अपने सन्तानों का उपनयन करके आचार्यकुल में अर्थात् जहाँ पूर्ण विद्वान और पूर्ण विदुषी स्त्री शिक्षा और विद्यादान करने वाली हो वहाँ लड़के और लड़कियों को भेज दें।
(सत्यार्थप्रकाश, समुल्लास २)

“The twice born ought to perform the sacred-thread ceremony of their *children* in the beginning of the 9th year and send them to the preceptor's house, *i.e.*, they should send their sons and *daughters* to the schools equipped with profoundly learned masters and *mistresses*”

प्रावृता यज्ञोपवीतिनीमभ्युदानयन् जपेत् । (गोभिल० २-१)

“Ushering the sacred-thread-wearing lady, let him recite etc” (Vide Gobhil 2/1)

² ब्रह्मचर्येण कन्या युवान विन्दते पतिम् ॥

(अथर्ववेद ११-५-१८)

“Let the girl seek a fully-grown-up husband after undergoing Brahmacharya or student-period.” (Atharva Veda XI-5-18)

³ सम्राज्ञी श्वशुरे भव सम्राज्ञी श्वश्रवा भव । ननान्दरि सम्राज्ञी भव सम्राज्ञी अधिदेवृषु ॥ (ऋग्वेद १०-८५-४६)

“Be thou a co-ruler with thy father-in-law and co-ruler with thy mother-in-law, co-ruler with thy sister-in-law and with thy brother-in-law” (Rigveda X-85-46)

wherein women are maltreated ¹

6. That the daughter is as much the recipient of inheritance as her brother ²

7. That the widow has as much right of her remarriage (under certain conditions, of course) as a widower ³

१ यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवता ।
यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफला क्रिया ॥
शोचन्ति जामयो यत्र विनश्यत्याशु तत् कुलम् ।
न शोचन्ति तु यत्रैता वर्धन्ते तद्विसर्वाद ॥

(मनु० ३-५६, ५७)

“Wherever women are honoured, there it is heaven (abode of gods) Wherever they are not honoured, there all activities fail That family meets its doom very soon wherein women are unhappy. Wherever they are not unhappy that family always prospers ” (Manusmṛiti, III-56, 57)

२ अविशेषेण पुत्राणा दायो भवति धर्मतः ।

मियुनाना विसर्गादौ मनु स्वायम्भुवोऽब्रवीत् ॥

(निरुक्त)

“The children of both sexes inherit lawfully the legacy. Thus said Manu Swayambhava at the creation of the Universe ” (Nirukta)

३ सा चेदक्षतयोनि स्याद गत प्रत्यागतापि वा ।

पौनर्भवेन भर्ता सा पुनः सत्कारमर्हति ॥

(मनु० ६-१७६)

“If the woman is virgin, even if she has been to her husband's house, she has a right of being remarried when widow to another husband ” (Manusmṛiti IX-176)

8 That man and woman have equal rights ¹

It is difficult to trace the history of the humiliation of womanhood in India and elsewhere, possibly it may be coeval with the degeneration of Vedic civilisation. Whenever people become barbarous, the law of "might is right" begins to reign supreme and those who are physically weak are deprived of their rights. Women are weak of body by nature and therefore they suffer. They have to give way to brute force and become an object of man's lust. This rule holds equally good all over the world. Swami Dayanand holds that with the regeneration of Vedic standard of living, women will again occupy their old position of distinction and honour.

Non-Hindu religionists have often exploited the present fallen condition of Hindu womanhood and have tried to reap a cheap harvest out of it. It is generally believed that the present emancipation of womanhood is due to the Christian Reli-

¹प्रजानार्थं स्त्रियं सृष्टा सतानार्थं च मानवा ।

तस्मात् साधारणो धर्मः श्रुतौ पत्न्या सहोदित ॥

(मनुस्मृति ६-६६)

"Women are born to bear, men to beget. Therefore in the Vedas is allowed to a man equal rights with his wife." (Manusmriti IX-96)

gion Our Christian missionaries forget their own past doings and whenever scientific advancement brings some boon to mankind, they jump up and with the help of political advantages which they luckily possess in these days, begin to claim all the credit for themselves. The real fact is that neither old Judaism nor newer Christianity did anything to ameliorate the position of women. On the other hand the basic doctrines of these religions are such that consistent with them, woman can never claim a high position in the society. If you just study the Book of Genesis, you will find that the woman was made, first *for* the man, secondly, *after* the man and thirdly *out of* the man's body. These three factors are responsible for the woman's inferiority of position. Had there been no man, there should have been no woman. What was her need? She had no independent existence, no independent birth. Just look at the following portion —

“But for Adam there was *not found an help meet for him*. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept and he *took one of his ribs*, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. *And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman.*”¹

¹ Genesis II 20, 23

It was long believed by Christians that the Lord God made Adam in His own image, but not Eve. He breathed His breath into Adam's body and not into Eve's. Therefore woman's position was only a subordinate one.

"For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man."¹

Some Christians went even so far as to deny human soul to women.

Then all ills that man is subject to have been alleged to have originated from the sin of the woman. It is Eve that first falls into the temptations of the Satan and it is Eve that works as the Satan's agent in seducing Adam and leading to his loss of Paradise. Therefore it is that the Lord God curses her in the following language.—

"I shall greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception, in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and *he shall rule over thee*."²

Who could defy God and his Ordinances? Who could undo the curses inflicted by God Himself upon poor women? It was just in the fitness

¹ I. Corinthians XI. 8, 9

² Genesis III. 16

of things that devout Christian apostles should speak in these terms —

“Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they *are commanded to be under obedience* as also saith the law And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home, *for it is a shame for women to speak in the Church*”¹

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is of the Church; and he is the saviour of the body”²

“Let the woman learn *in silence with all subjection* But I suffer not a woman to teach; not to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence For *Adam was first formed* then Eve And Adam was not deceived but the *woman being deceived was in transgression*”³

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your husbands, that, if any obey not the word they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives”⁴

¹ I Corinthians XIV 34, 35

² Ephesians V 22, 23

³ I Timothy II 11 to 14

⁴ I Peter III 1

It is a well known fact that the Puritan Christian poet Milton did not teach Latin to his daughters because Latin was as much too sacred for Christian woman as Sanskrit to Hindu woman. The ancient "Law Salique" which disallowed inheritance to woman or to man through woman was also a Christian law. Therefore, I say that what emancipation woman has got in the West is not on account of Christianity but in spite of it. And much of the prominence that the material West has given to the fair sex is rather illusory than real. Formerly the woman was an honest maid-servant, now she is a glittering toy, or a trickful seducer. She is as much the object of man's lust today as she was a hundred years ago. The form is changed, the essence is the same. Then it was an iron-cage that restricted her freedom. Now they have devised golden cages into which she herself rushes and loses liberty. It is high time that women leaders take a stock of the situation and try to calculate their gains and losses.

Swami Dayanand has given a firmer and broader base to women's emancipation. He has given a death blow to the bosh theories of woman's origin. The Vedas do not say that the woman was created *for* man, *after* man and *from out of* his

body On the contrary : माता पितरमृत आवभाज ।

“Nature has *distributed equally between* mother and father ”¹

यन् मातरं च पितरं च साकमजनयथास्तन्व स्वाया ।

“Who made both *mother and father together* out of His own *essence* ”²

It is this Vedic “*essence*” which could dispel the long existing delusion under which rationalistic Christian missionaries have been labouring for ages. The creation of the woman’s body out of the man’s rib has long been a puzzle and the modern biologist cannot but laugh at it. Max Muller thought and thought and could at the long last, unlock the mystery with the Vedic key In his introduction to the “Science of Religion” (page 46) he says —

‘*Bone* seemed a telling expression for what we should call the *innermost essence*’ In the ancient hymns of the Veda, too, a poet asks — “Who has seen the first-born, when he who had no *bones*, i.e., no form, bore him that has *bones*, i.e., when that which was formless assumed form, or it may be when that which had no *essence*, received an *essence* ”

It is a clear vindication of Swami Dayanand’s

¹ Rig Veda I-164-8

² Rig Veda X-54-3

position. It is he who has brought Hinduism out of the utter insignificance to which it had dwindled through the negligence and ignorance of Hindu Pandits. When Vedic light shines more and more, and man comes to understand the value of Vedic principles, woman is sure to raise her head with pride and say in the words of Rig Veda —

अहं केतुर्ह मूर्वाहिमुग विवाचनी ।

“I am the banner, I am the head, I am the true Judge.”¹

¹ Rig Veda X-159-2

CHAPTER XII

JOINT FAMILY

Another point, much condemned these days is the joint nature of the Hindu family. On this point also the best thinkers are divided. All families are joint in the beginning. Children cannot be separated in their infancy. Even animals keep joint upto a certain stage. But the question is how far this is to be carried. I hold that somehow or other Hinduism has carried it to extremes. If you just study the Hindu Law on this point you will be amazed at the labyrinth. It is not easy to decide the Hindu cases of inheritance. You use all the knowledge of permutation and combination and then you fail. All this is due to joint family system.

Some hold that an agricultural country, as India is, must have joint family. It is necessary. It is indispensable. But it is difficult to say whether India was ever exclusively agricultural or whether the industrial development which is the special trait of some of the most advanced nations of to-

day was altogether missing in the past India. The imposition of exclusive 'this' or exclusive 'that' upon India is not only too one-sided and therefore unfair, but also very misleading. Even in an agricultural country much simpler rules can be framed which might save the nation from the existing evils of joint family.

- Like birth-based caste-system, joint family system has also been assumed as a part and parcel of Hinduism and at a little deviation people begin to cry that Hindu religion is in danger. But Swami Dayanand's interpretation of the Vedas and Vedic literature has thrown an altogether new light upon the question. While discussing this point we forget that jointness of a family is natural upto a certain stage only and becomes quite unnatural later on. The foetus in the mother's womb is inseparably joint. The mother's food is its food. But there comes a time that the foetus should have its independent existence. The suck from without is the first step towards separation. The child begins to shake off this jointness. The mother feels it. It gives her excessive pain. But the necessity overcomes all considerations. Then for sometimes the child clings to the mother. It does not leave her bosom and when it does so, it is in-

convenient to both. But if it lasts too long, the development of the child is marred. Therefore in later stages the child grows freer and freer and the attachment to the mother gets less and less. When the child becomes full grown up man and competent to propagate, it is high time that he should be entirely free. It is necessary for him as well as for the old family. He being a full man, wants a full man's nourishment. The parents are too feeble to provide double nourishment. Therefore if he remains a hanger upon the family it causes atrophy to both. The jointness of the family must come to an end.

It is not that the ancient Aryans did not realise this point. Even now the custom is that the parents of the bride and the bridegroom both present to the couple at the time of marriage certain necessary articles, clothes, utensils, money in order to give them a start in life. This means that the couple has to lead an independent life in future. They mean to say, "Well, as parents we did our duty so far. - We brought you up, educated you and helped you in ten thousand other ways, seeing that you were incompetent to stand on your own legs. Now that you are fully developed we do the last duty of giving you a fair start in life and providing you

with certain necessities Hereafter it will be your duty to establish yourselves in the world in the best way you choose or can " The ceremonies and rites performed at the time of marriage all point to this fact The new couple, hitherto boy and girl, are now man and wife, Grihasthas or householders, the owners and rulers of a separate house "एकोऽहम् बहुस्याम्" (I am one, let me be many) is equally applicable to the family The family was one The marriage of the son or daughter has multiplied it.

The evils of the joint family as noticed in the present Hindu society are as follows —

- 1 Grown up sons do not realize their responsibilities They depend too much and too long upon their parents and their potentialities are not fully materialized This is a great loss not only to the individuals or their families, but to the nation at large It has been seen that parentless children often grow more vigorously

- 2 The anxiety of the parents for their sons and grandsons has a very weakening effect upon their own development and they have a too early break-down

- 3 Family bickerings become the fashion of the day and they lead to serious complications,

litigations and in many cases to ultimate ruin.

4 The growth of the family is arrested and the nation cannot develop independence of character or enterprising initiative

5 Joint family system effects adversely the numerical growth of the nation Just as young trees, planted too close, die out for want of nourishment, similarly several brothers, living under the same roof dwindle out Several men have had seven sons, but very few forty-nine grandsons. Close living kills or at least weakens fecundity. It is often said that joint family is a refuge to widows and orphans and provides for the aged. The writer has closely watched numerous families and has also collected statistics on this point He can say from whatever knowledge he possesses that it is utterly wrong If the reader has a chance to peep behind the screen, he will find that the condition is not what it is claimed to be Widows and orphans who have the misfortune of being members of a joint family often drag on a miserable life of discontent Instead of strengthening the ties of love, joint family weakens it Every member thinks of his rights and very few of their duties

To me it appears that in professions, such as agriculture or trade, where joint family is supposed

to be a boon, if cooperative system replaces joint family the results will be much better. I hold that the English people have no joint family system and therefore they are more enterprising. In these four hundred years they have amazingly multiplied and spread over Australia, Africa, America and elsewhere. For the Hindu, India is too big. For the English, England is too small. A Hindu is by habit averse to leaving his home. He will quarrel with his brother over an inch of his house and will not care to go abroad. This was certainly against the policy of ancient Aryans. Their motto was

निरसं कुलं नृणां हि दुःखं नरं च न कुर्यादिति ।

"It is the coward that drink the saltish water of a well, arguing that it is their father's." Those who are valiant will carve their own independent way and make their own position. When two or three branches of the same family grow parallel to each other and make a position, each of them is proud of the other and there grows between them an invisible, but very strong tie of love. Joint family is a three-legged race in which neither of the members can run to their full capacity and the game is more meant for fun and laughter of others than for any definite purpose or achievement.

Joint family system is no doubt oriental and patriotism sometimes actuates us to look upon it with favour. But I do not think that it is ancient as well. Useful it is not. Harms done by it are clear. It is allied to caste system and if it is broken, caste system can also get loose. Therefore it is necessary that both these should go and give way to more rationalistic substitutes.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SHUDDHI MOVEMENT

Perhaps the greatest boon that Swami Dayanand has brought to present Hinduism is the Shuddhi-movement. Shuddhi as such was quite unknown to the Hindu before the advent of Swami Dayanand. The Hindu society was, so to speak, a mouse-trap with the door turned inside out. One could go out but could not come in. The Hindus in their weaker moments had built round themselves lofty walls of social customs and religious superstitions and every Hindu thought that his safety lay in taking refuge behind these walls. Free air was denied to them and they could not make any headway in the world. Crossing the sea was a religious prohibition, a touch of foreigners or their food a sacrilege. A Hindu must remain within the restricted geographical boundary of Hindustan and should not drink water or take food touched by a non-Hindu. He was free to hold any philosophical, metaphysical or religious views he liked, but he could not go out of the nar-

row grooves as far as practice was concerned. The result was obvious. Hinduism was the most misrepresented in foreign lands. Who would go there to put a correct view? Christian missionaries depicted the Hindus as the most barbarous, having no religion, no culture and even no language. Even now there are people in America and elsewhere who entertain the same views about Indians. When Mehta Jaimini went to South America a Christian told him in the meeting that perhaps Mehtaji learnt how to put on clothes in the ship as he had heard that the Indians kept naked.

At home the Hindus were never safe. Moslems had made cheap converts. There are millions of Hindus who never forsook Hindu religion, Hindu beliefs or even Hindu customs. Yet they are called Mohammedans or neo-Moslems. Why? Do they love Islam? Perhaps they never cared to know what Islam is. Their only fault is that in the times of their defeat or helplessness they ate or drank, or were compelled to eat and drink with their Moslem conquerors. That was sufficient to extern them from the Hindu fold. And when these persons were denied social rights or were looked down upon by their own men, oftener than not, they were driven to the necessity of embrac-

ing Islam openly. Most of these neo-Moslems piteously implored forgiveness, and expressed readiness to undergo the hardest penances or atonements in order that they might be allowed to come back to the religion of their forefathers, but no penitence on the part of the prodigal son was adequate enough to arouse the love of the stone-hearted father.

The history of Hinduism is very tragic. No other society on the surface of the earth, ever lost its members so easily. Christian missionaries in the South could convert villages after villages simply by throwing crumbs of their bread into the village wells and declaring next day that the villagers having drunk the water of the polluted wells, had lost Hindu religion and had no alternative left but to embrace Christianity. Poor villagers would weep in vain and express their innocence. But their own Pandits would declare them as lost and non-reclaimable. "Gone once, gone for ever" was the simple formula of Hinduism. And if Hinduism had no other weakness, this one weakness was more than enough to seal its doom and to annihilate it from the surface of the earth.

But Hinduism has better future in store. A society which can produce men like Swami Daya-

nand has a very long lease of life indeed. Swami Dayanand preached that Vedic Religion and Vedic culture were not a monopoly of a certain privileged class. Every human being irrespective of his birth, country or nationality had a right to be benefited from the Vedic light. And as Vedic religion had no birth-based caste, the question of outcasting anybody did not arise at all. Mere eating and drinking prohibited things or permissible things at prohibited quarters might be a sin, but by no means the sin of a type that might send the sinner to his eternal doom. In Manusmriti, and other scriptures and sacred codes there are given punishments or atonements for different faults, crimes or sins which are commensurate to the nature of those failings. Eternal ostracism is by no means the punishment for all ills great or small. Thus point the medieval Pundit forgot. He blindly applied the same formula to all cases and his verdicts were as blindly accepted by the ignorant masses. In many cases this weakness of the Hindu Pandits was encouraged or even exploited by Mahommedan rulers. Their Molvis were, by education, zealot proselytisers. Every convert that they could make was a sure step towards their salvation. The methods to be adopted did not count. God would

judge them by the results and by the number they could entice in. This has been a tradition with them and they still adhere to it. These Molvis were always on the look-out for the small transgressions of the Hindus and whenever there was even a petty aberration, it was circulated with the rapidity of an electric current and the poor person was victimized. It is not difficult to quote instances wherein recourse had been made towards purchasing Pandits. These Pandits, very religious, highly pious, and exceptionally scrupulous of their social or dietary purity, never thought that in their narrow-minded religiosity, they were creating a big hole into the fortification of their nationality, which would lead to the utter ruin and total extinction of their religion, piety or purity. The betrayal of national cause was not looked upon as a sin. And therefore these Pandits were as ready to pronounce verdicts as the Molvis to get them pronounced. Thus it was that the Moslem Molvis and the Hindu Pandits joined together and worked together—with different motives of course—in turning people out of the Hindu fold and into Islamic religion.

This evil was also noticed formerly by a few politically minded thinkers, such as the Great Sivaji. It is said that at his advice, several Moslems

embraced Hinduism in his time* One Swami Ramanand is also said to have made certain converts But these are only rare examples, not even known to the public and by no means counted as "practice" The first serious thought given to the problem was by Swami Dayanand He pointed out two things First of all the Vedas were as much the light of God, as the Sun As every creature had a right to be benefited by the Sun, similarly every individual had a right to enjoy the benefit of the Vedic Teachings The second thing was that nobody had a right to keep his other fellow creatures deprived of the benefits, either of the sunlight or of the Vedic light From this point of view the Hindus had been great sinners—so far that they did not allow anybody the enjoyment of Vedic light If you take by force a rupee from any body's pocket, you *rob* him If you take his life, you murder him But you *rob* him as well as *murder* him, *nationally* as well as *spiritually* when you say to him, "Vedic light is not meant for thee" This is his individual spiritual loss so far as to deprive him of spiritual progress But it is the loss of the whole nation too because the nation has been

*Bajaji Nimbalkar and Hetaji Palkar are two well known examples

deprived of the services of an individual which might have been valuable to any extent. And who can deny this enormous national loss in these days when numerical strength of a community or a nation is being taken into account in ascertaining its political rights, and when religious, social and economic rights of a people cannot be safeguarded except by having political rights. 'Whose stick, his buffalo' is the simple formula.

Yes, then, Swami Dayanand advised his followers to allow no distinction of caste, birth, nationality or anything and fling the doors of the Vedic religion wide open. Swami Dayanand himself converted one Moslem. After his death, his followers took up the work. But they had two difficulties in their way. First of all it was not easy to convince the Moslems or Christians of the truthfulness of the Vedic religion. They were unapproachable. The second—and it was the most formidable—was that the Hindus themselves were highly inimical to such a propaganda. The Arya Samajists have had to bear untold sufferings for the sake of Shuddhi. He who took part in the Shuddhi of any individual, or partook of even so much as a glass of water or a piece of sweetmeat from his hand, was turned out by his family, not allowed

to pull water from the common well and even his menial servants would boycott him. The greatest fight which the Arya Samajists have had to face in the respect of Shuddhi was not against Moslems, but against their own men—the Hindu Pandits and their blind followers. After Swami Dayanand, the most zealous worker in this line was Pt Lekhrām. He was the pioneer and the success which he got so much aroused a commotion in the Moslem society that on 6th March 1897, a Moslem cheat in the garb of a convert, at Lahore, thrust his knife into his chest and put an end to his life. The martyrdom of Pt Lekhrām will ever be remembered in the history of the Arya Samaj as a very important event. It may be called a turning point. Since then, though the Moslem frenzy has increased, the Hindu angle of vision has much changed and their opposition considerably cooled down. If you compare the conditions that prevailed in 1897 and those which prevail today, you will find a remarkable difference. Then there was hardly any Hindu that would *tolerate* the conversion of any Moslem or non-Hindu into Hinduism. Now there is hardly any Hindu throughout the length and breadth of India, who might be so bold as to openly *oppose*. For this two factors are responsible.

First, the steady and steadfast work of the Arya Samajists under the leadership of Swami, Shraddhanand, Lala Lajpat Rai, Pt Bhojdat Arya Musafir and a great band of other workers whose names we have no space to give. Secondly, the fanaticism and narrow-mindedness which the Mahommedans of India have been persistently displaying in the realm of politics. The Moplah riots of Malabar in 1921, and similar other small or big riots that have been too frequent within our memory in which the Moslems have perpetrated forced conversion have been a great eye-opener of the Hindus and they have begun to feel that whatever the opinions of their orthodox pundits on other religious point, in the matters of Shuddhi the only correct view is that of the Arya Samaj. Forty years ago the Arya Samajist was looked upon as a great *defiler* of the Hindu religion as he would adulterate the purity of the Hindu religion by bringing in an alloy from outside. Today the Arya Samajist is counted as a great *defender* of the Hindu faith. This is a great triumph for Swami Dayanand and a much greater triumph for Hinduism, as after a long sleep of centuries, it has risen up and has been able to make an honourable stand before the world.

There is one more point which we cannot leave unnoticed here. It is from the point of view of Moslems. They have raised a storm of opposition against Shuddhi and are cursing Swami Dayanand and his followers right and left. First of all, they forget that if conversion into one's fold is a sin, they have always been the greatest sinners, and are so even today. Secondly, they do not think that the Shuddhi movement bestows upon them a right which had been long denied to them. Nobody for a moment can favour forced conversion. The Shuddhi movement does not allow it. The individual conscience must be respected. By Shuddhi we mean the conversion of such persons only as are keen on the point. The Hindus before Swami Dayanand, held that the Moslems were *Mlechchhas*—intrinsically impure, impure by birth—such that nothing could purify them at least in this present life. It was a common saying that “an ass cannot be made a calf by washing it” even in the Ganges water. Swami Dayanand said that all men are men, intrinsically equal, never so bad as not to be purified, and Vedic teachings are an efficacious soap to wash off their impurities. He also pointed that *Mlechchha*, *Yavan* or such other words that are being used in derision for others

should at once stop as they show narrow-minded communalism. *Yavan* originally meant a Greek and *Mlechchha* one whose pronunciation of Sanskrit words was bad. But the animosities of later times gave these words wrong meaning. Swami Dayanand cleared one more important mistake. He said that Indian Moslems should not be looked upon as aliens and foreigners. They are the descendants of the Hindu forefathers, as much indigenous as present Hindus, and therefore our brothers. For this change of Hindu outlook the credit goes cent per cent to Swami Dayanand and the Moslems have every reason to be grateful to him. At present they do not realize this point. They are misled by narrow interests and often look for political emancipation to Persia, Arabia and Turkey. But I am sure that the rise of magnanimous souls among them will one day change their mentality and some future political revolution will open their eyes as it has opened the eyes of the Hindus. It is only a question of time.

CHAPTER XIV

HINDI

The question of language is one of the most vital ones. It is closely connected with the growth of a nation. The language of a nation is not like a coat of cloth which can be changed at will. It is like the skin, which takes its birth with the birth of the body and grows as the body grows. Besides it is not a mere outer covering, it does not merely protect the body from the attacks of heat or cold or other harms or injuries. It is visibly and invisibly connected with the innermost parts of the body and helps them in their growth. The evolution of a language is the evolution of the nation speaking it. It is the depository of the history of all stages through which the thinking of the nation has passed whether individually or collectively. Words, sentences, phrases, idioms, even suffixes and prefixes are, so to speak, a record office which keeps a detailed account of all the past activities of the nation. In a language we find registered customs and manners, habits and idiosyncra-

sies, belief and disbeliefs, aims and aspirations, achievements and failures, in fact, all that has made our past and is likely to help us in moulding our future. Man begins to drink his language with the milk of his mother and continues drinking it till the time of his death, the necessity of weaning never arising. It is why Carlyle said that he would rather submit to the surrender of the territories of the British Empire rather than to the loss of Shakespeare or Milton.

The language problem, being so very important, it was but necessary that Swami Dayanand should give his best thought to it. And he did. He found that the Hindus were as divided in the respect of their language as in other matters. The biblical legend that God in jealousy threw in the midst of mankind the diversity of language in order to prevent them from making the Tower of Babylon is literally true to the Hindu nation. God knows through which jealous god it was and when it was and how it was, that linguistic splitting took place in Hindusthan and building of the national tower was thrown into jeopardy. To again unite the Hindus it was necessary to have one language which might be spoken and understood through the length and breadth of India.

Such a necessity had been felt by the Britishers when they took possession of India. To rule over a people speaking hundreds of languages was a terrible task. And therefore they devised that in order to bring all jarring elements into close harmony, with the avoidal of undue rivalry as well, they should be given the advantage of English language. It was as easy for them, as natural. English was their tongue. They knew it without having the trouble to learn it. It had, besides, all the glitter of the language of a ruling nation. The suggestion was as easily made, as readily accepted. English schools opened and English-knowing clerks began to be manufactured till all Government offices were full of them. This facilitated the work of Government. English Sahebs coming fresh from England could take up the work with no preparation whatsoever. The machinery of administration went on smoothly. It had unifying effect also. An official from Madras speaking Tamil or Telgu could easily work in Simla through English language.

But it should be remembered that English language was nothing more than a *vilayati* coat and would not serve as *skm*. However beautiful, however glossy, however protective too at times,

it was after all an outer-covering A fur coat does protect us from cold, but it is incompetent to do one thousand and one other functions which it does only on the sheep's body If you minutely study the educational history of the last 150 years of India, especially of the period between Macaulay and today, you will notice that English language with all the good that it has done us and promises to do in future, has not proved a whit better than the fur-coat With all the money and energy we have bestowed upon the acquisition of English language, we are the most illiterate people on the face of the Earth Not even one per cent of our men and women know English And the fun is that our national language has been dwarfed We take boyish pride in our fur coat while our skin is withering underneath it

Swami Dayanand's was the eye of the sage He could see what others could not He saw all the glitter of English education and shook his head sceptically He realized that if Hindu solidarity was at all to be recovered, it was highly necessary to have one language

The question was by no means easy India is a big country It has a number of provinces, further divided into sub-provinces linguistically

at least. Which language to choose, rather, which language not to choose. The Bengali would not give up Bengali. Why should he? Was it not unpatriotic? Will the proud Maratha do without his Marathi? How can he? Then will the Gujarati forego his language? Impossible. How to solve this Gordian knot. So terrible and yet so urgent. And the fun of funs is that while the Bengali's patriotism, the Maratha's pride and the Gujarati's shrewdness all melted away before the cause of English, nobody was ready to make a small sacrifice in favour of one Indian language. No language could tolerate the supremacy of any one of its sisters. They would submit to a foreign yoke rather than compromise among themselves.

Swami Dayanand's mother tongue was Gujarati. English he did not know. His literary language was Sanskrit. The best part of his life was devoted to the study of Sanskrit. He could use it with the ease and fluency of his mother tongue. In Sanskrit he had found the key to unlock the matchless treasure of Vedic literature. The Vedas had brought solace to his uneasy soul and he had firm belief that the Vedic faith was the sovereign remedy for all human ills. It was for this reason that for several years he kept the vow of

speaking only in Sanskrit

But Sanskrit could not be the language of masses True it was that it was not the dead language It was only the language of a dying people. Sanskrit-knowing Pandits were available everywhere and Swami Dayanand could exchange his thoughts with them in all the distant parts of India through it But to approach the masses through Sanskrit was impossible On this point we must be thankful to B. Keshava Chandra Sen When Swami Dayanand visited Bengal, he was speaking only in Sanskrit To his bitter experience, as he denounced idolatry and the Pandits would not tolerate it, they often deliberately mistranslated his ideas to the public B. Keshava Chandra Sen advised Swami Dayanand to use the language of the people if he at all wanted to make himself understood by them Swami Dayanand at once realised the beauty of the suggestion and immediately began to act upto it.

But then there was the question as to which Indian language to adopt His patriotism could have been in favour of Gujrati It was his mother tongue But what of that! Wider interests were to be taken into account Narrow patriotism would not do The one essence that makes patrio-

tism, patriotism is selflessness—merging of one's interests and one's idiosyncrasies into the interests of a wider humanity. Swami Dayanand found that of all the Indian languages, it was only Hindi that could be easily made the language of the whole of India. It was even now spoken by the majority of Indians and many of the languages spoken in different parts of the country were nothing more than dialects easily fusible.

Thus it was that he adopted Hindi and wrote his works in this language. One of the rules of conduct that he framed for Arya Samajists was that every member should learn Hindi which he called Arya Bhasha or language of Aryans. Swami Dayanand is looked upon as the first-maker of Modern Hindi. His followers have tried their best to promulgate it. Wherever the Arya Samaj has gone, there has gone with it, its language, I mean Hindi. If you visit the distant north-western frontier—Peshawar, Rawalpindi, and Kohat, where half a century ago Hindi was quite unknown and where Panjabi Sikh spoke Gurmukhi and Panjabi Mohammadan would not tolerate anything but Urdu, you will find Arya Samajists not only using Hindi in their daily work, but also studying it as a literary language. It was more than forty

years ago that Swami Shraddhanand, then Lala Munshi Ram started his paper *Satdharma Pracharak* at Jalandhar. In those days nobody could read Hindi in the Panjab. The paper had to be brought out in Urdu. But such a steady change took place, that now Hindi literature is very popular and the number of Hindi books published or consumed in the Panjab is by no means meagre. The work started by Swami Dayanand has now been taken up by others. Hindi has found a new champion in the person of Mahatma Gandhi—another Gujrati—who with a splendid band of workers has given Hindi a very great momentum. In the extreme south, where they feared that the Telgu or Tamil speaking Madrasis will not allow an inch for Hindi, the redoubtable Rajgopalacharya has become the father of the Hindi Pracharini Movement. Hundreds of Madrasis come every year to Allahabad and other northern centres of Hindi-education in order to learn Hindi. The Hindi-Sahitya Sammelan Prayag (Allahabad) has now got a network of organisations, some big, some small, all over India, whose main object is to make Hindi the *Lingua Franca* of India. The Arya Samajic preachers have gone to every part of the country and their lectures in Hindi are now more or less understood

everywhere. The necessity of one common language for India has been now admitted by the leaders of all provinces and Hindi is finding a ready welcome everywhere.

Not only in India Arya Samajs now exist in other parts of the world too. Burma has a number of them with their Arya Pratinidhi Sabha or Arya representative body. So has Africa. In Fiji, Mauritius and distant parts of South America, especially Dutch Guiana, there are Samajs. Trinidad is now becoming a centre of Arya Samajic activities. In all these distant countries the Aryas have taken with them their language too, I mean Arya Bhasha or Hindi. Religious tracts and books written in Hindi are now being read with zest everywhere. In the words of Babu Purushottam Das Tandon, the present Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of U P, Hindi has perhaps a greater number of speakers than any other language, not only in India but in the whole world. It is hoped that with political emancipation of India and therefore of Hindus—a thing which is now quite within our sight-range, there will soon take place a fusion of Indian languages and a new and more developed form of Hindi will evolve, towards the making of which all provinces will contribute

their quota. The day is not far when this will be an accomplished fact and the arduous task begun by Swami Dayanand will come to its completion. What has George Stephenson done for Railway-Engine, that Swami Dayanand has done for Hindi and his name shall go to the posterity as the first maker of Hindi. This is a great contribution of Swami Dayanand toward the Hindu solidarity.

CHAPTER XV

URDU-HINDI CONTROVERSY

Though not quite relevant to our subject, Urdu-Hindi controversy needs a few remarks in order to clarify the position of Hindi. The controversy is a recent one and is the outcome of present political muddle. Some Mohammadans of India have set up Urdu as a rival of Hindi and are nowadays making much ado about nothing.

The controversy, I hold, finds its inspiration from some misunderstanding and some misrepresentation. Hindi and Urdu were never two languages. Urdu is only another script of the same language and if any cleavage has taken place, it is quite new.

It has often been given to understand that Urdu came into existence in the time of Shahjehan, the grandson of the great Moghal Akbar. It is said that the word Urdu means 'camp' and the language which was spoken in the camp of Shahjehan's army came to be called Urdu.

I do not deny that 'Urdu' means 'camp'. But

it is no more than a fiction that the language now known as Urdu or Hindi never existed before Shahjehan. Who first gave the name of Urdu to it is a subject of research and cannot be dealt with in these pages. But there is not the least doubt that the language was spoken as well as written several centuries before Shahjehan.

Let me first tell you that Urdu and Hindi are not two different languages. Urdu is a script and not a language. Hindi is a language and not a script. The script in which Hindi is written these days is called Nagari. This Nagari script has now been adopted by Marathi also. Formerly Marathi was written in Modi character. This character has not been totally extinct and is even now in vogue in some form. But the well established script of Marathi is now Nagari. Hindi is a different language from Marathi. But both Hindi and Marathi have the same script, Nagari, just as several quite distinct European languages have one script called Roman. To confuse language with script is a great mistake and leads to good deal of useless wrangling.

Now a word about Urdu script. How did it originate? Its birth is akin to the birth of Roman in India. The language of the Moghal rulers of

have further helped their this attitude. An English man coming to India calls himself Anglo-Indian and England, *Home*. His stay in India is a sojourn in a foreign land. He works here, just as a workman works in a mill. The mill is not his home. He must quit it in the evening. Not so the Moslem rulers. They had permanently settled in India and the problems of India were their problems. No doubt religious fanaticism did exist and often had an insalubrious effect. But several Moghal rulers were wise enough and efforts were made by them to minimize the evil.

It was at such a time and for such reasons that Urdu script came into use. I call it script, because originally it was only a script. What the rulers did was that they began to write the language of masses in the script in which Persian was being written. It gave them an ease. They were conversant with the script. The obstacle was that of language. Whatever the masses spoke began to be jotted down in Persian character and this character in a course of time came to be known as Urdu.

It does not need a stretch of imagination to understand this. The formation of language shows it most clearly. The language *spoken* in the bazars of India is claimed to be Urdu by the Mohamma-

nouns are easily lendable and borrowable. This transaction can be freely done without changing the characteristic of the language. One more thing needs mention. The Moghal rulers, when they began to write the language of the masses called Hindi, in their Persian character, and gave it the new name Urdu, did not fill it with Persian or Arabic words. Their aim was to approach the masses, not to thrust a new language on the people. Had they filled this language with uncommon Persian and Arabic words their main object would have been foiled. One or two Persian words, here and there, did not matter. This is allowable in all cases. In fact it is not called borrowing. It is mere assimilation. Even borrowing should be done according to the capacity of the borrower. The borrowing that makes him bankrupt and in the end kills him-is no borrowing at all.

Similarly Hindi too did not take uncommon Sanskrit words in those days. Hindi was the language of the masses, and there was a difference between the Hindi of the people and the Sanskrit of a selected few Pandits. The script of both the languages was the same, i.e., Nagari. But the case of Hindi is a little different. Hindi has directly come from Sanskrit. It first took the form of

Prakrit and then at later times became Hindi. The verbs and pronouns used in Hindi and Urdu both are not only the same, but have come down not from Persian or Arabic, but from Sanskrit. Ānā, Jānā, Khānā, Sonā, Uthnā, Baithnā, Chalnā, Pīnā—they are all popularised forms of Sanskrit verbs. 'Main', 'tum', 'jo', etc., all the pronouns are also changed forms of Sanskrit pronouns. No champion of Urdu can say that his Urdu verbs or Urdu pronouns are Persian or Arabic. Thus it is that Hindi, which is a language has come down from Sanskrit and Urdu, not being a distinct language, is only the name of a separate script (call it Persian Script if you like) in which that language Hindi is written. Therefore the quarrel between Urdu and Hindi as separate languages is futile and should not be made much of. As regards Sanskritisation or Persianisation of the language, I hold that either is bad as it makes the language unintelligible to the masses. The mentality of our Moham-madans who have loaded the language with Persian and Arabic words is different from the mentality of their forefathers whose object in using Urdu script was convergence to the people and not the divergence from them.

One thing must be remembered. We should

be fair to Mohamādāns also. The language which we call Hindi (you may call it Urdu if you like) and which is spoken in Hindustan, is neither the language of Mohammad or Abubakar or Mohammadan caliphs, nor the language of Rama, Krishna, Kapil or Vyas, the Hindu sages. It has come into being by the joint efforts of Hindus and Mohammadans both, it is the result of joint labours of Tulsi, Sur, Insha and Mir. Therefore it is necessary that the quarrel between Urdu and Hindi must go. Both Hindus and Mohammadans should think that the language which they speak in India is a link between them and this link should not be made so stiff as to become a gulf. The well-being of both these communities lies in it. If Moslems love Persian and Arabic words so much and if Hindus love Sānskrit words so much, the best way is that the Moslems adopt the language of the Quoran and the Hindus, that of the Vedas. But is it possible or practicable? Certainly not. 'Then why create a linguistic difference where no difference exists?' When Swami Dayanand condescended to Hindi from Sanskrit, his object was to use the language of the people and therefore, he has all along used the common Hindi words. His opinion is that Hindi not only brings different sections of the Hindus

nearer, but also different communities, and religions that reside in India

Now the question is of Urdu and Nagari scripts. Nagari script has two advantages over Urdu. First of all, its alphabet is strictly phonetic and it is common to all scripts current in India. I mean Bengali, Uriya, 'Kana11, Marathi and Gurmukhi. Secondly, the forms of letters are very similar. The Persian script that makes the Hindi Urdu has two great defects. The alphabet is not at all phonetic and presents considerable difficulty for young children. Secondly, it is so different from three or four important scripts of India that the question of fusion does not arise. The campaign against illiteracy that has now been the concern of every patriot of India can be readily helped if Nagari script is brought into use. But we do not quarrel with Mohammadans on the point of script. If they want to retard their progress, by insisting upon Urdu and imposing a foreign script, it is their lookout. Our point is that Nagari has more chances of being the common Indian script and those who can see the thing in right perspective must support the cause. At present the Moslems of India are playing in the hands of foreign diplomats and political reasons often produce a rift in the flute

But if we go on steadily the time is near that all sections of the Indians will realize the value of fusion of languages and scripts and unnecessary differences will go

CHAPTER XVI

SPURIOUS LITERATURE

One very arduous and very very essential, yet a very thankless task, that Swami Dayanand did for Hinduism was the condemnation and disowning of spurious literature. People have given him a due praise for social reforms such as widow-remarriage, female education, and anti-untouchability. Some persons have thanked him for anti-idolatory work also. But the condemnation of spurious books has found no appreciation from any quarters except from his own followers. Homœopathic pills are always more popular than surgery. But being a follower of Swami Dayanand I give this work the uppermost position. If Swami Dayanand had done ten times more work than he has done and omitted this one, the result would have been an utter failure. I do not undervalue Homœopathic methods. They are good at their places. But there are diseases where the surgeon's knife is more urgently wanted. It is a matter of great satisfaction for me, that Swami Dayanand has applied the

surgeon's knife very ably and very boldly. To suppress diseases by superficial remedies is easy. But it needs all the skill to purge the system of all foreign matter and to keep it sound and healthy.

The Hindus are a nation of a very great antiquity. Their history is pre-historic. Their life is chequered with great rises and great falls. The river Ganges is quite pure at the Gangotri. But in its long journey upto Howrah, it receives so many tributaries that the water in the Hugly down the Howrah Bridge is hardly drinkable. It is full of foreign matter. The dirt of every house finds its place there.

So is the case with Vedic literature. The Gangotri of the Vedas is hidden somewhere in the dizzy heights of the long past. We are today under the Howrah bridge of the twentieth century of Christian Era. How many eras have gone before and been forgotten for good, only God knows. For the Howrah people, the Hugly is the Ganges and its muddy water the sacred Ganges water. For us, the twentieth century Hinduism is the only Hinduism. We know no other. Miss Mayo's notorious book *Mother India* begins with her experiences of the Hugly water. It was not possible for her to rise higher.

Swami Dayanand had a craze for tracing the rivers to their sources. You will find in his life a description of many such up-hill journeys. Sometimes he walks up the Alakhnanda to find its source, sometimes he threads his way through the jungles of the Narbada river and does not stop before he can come to Amarkantak. These geographical journeys were only occasional, but the eagerness to trace Vedic literature to its source had reached an acme in Swami Dayanand. The work he has done in this line is simply marvellous. He takes the Hugly water and loves it. But he does not love the mud and dirt that is there. He does not like to put it to his lips before he could filter it pure. Like many others he would not throw it as hopelessly impure. The water there was that of the Gangotri. How could he discard it? He had to avoid impurities and for them a filter was required.

When we speak of spurious Hindu literature we do not mean thereby anti-Vedic books. The books which were written by the Buddhists or Jains or which are being written these days by non-Hindu or anti-Hindu missionaries cannot be called spurious. Every man has a right to express his ideas. The water of the Jordon or of the

Zam-Zam is different from the water of the Ganges Everybody knows it and he has a right to choose between the two But when it passes for the Ganges water and the people accept it as such, it is really very harmful If the Buddhists wrote against the Vedas, it mattered little But the difficulty with Hindu literature is that much that is quite foreign has been mixed up with the real

The spurious Hindu literature has sprung up in two ways First of all, Vedic books written by the old Rishis have been adulterated with interpolations Secondly, independent books quite contrary to the Vedic doctrines have been written in the name of the sages so that they may pass as Vedic literature These books have proved the most harmful They have kept the people in utter deception Old Vedic doctrines have been long forgotten and false notions have taken their place As Sanskrit learning became rarer and rarer and ignorance increased, people became too dependent upon their priests and these priests through their selfishness and sometimes through ignorance too, instead of leading their adherents began to mislead them

Swami Dayanand discovered that one notorious set of this spurious literature was the Pura-

nas. They are held in special esteem in religious circles. It is alleged that the Vedas were meant for Sat Yuga or the Golden Age. They are too obscure for Kaliyuga or this iron age. People have lost the key of unlocking the Vedas. The sages, through their pity for common people, have written the Puranas. The Puranas are said to be 18 in number, though including several other books which are called Up-Puranas (उपपुराण) or Deputy Puranas their number becomes at least its double. They are voluminous too, some of them very voluminous indeed and lives are required to go through them. Therefore they are not read, except the Bhagavata or one or two others. Even the most learned very rarely remember their names correctly.

Swami Dayanand condemns them as spurious, because though singing the praises of the Vedas (Nigam and Agam निगम, अगम) in season and out of season, they go quite contrary to the Vedic doctrines. Some of them, the Vishnu Purana for example, contain certain historical facts too, recounting genealogies of several ancient dynasties, yet even this historical material has been made to weave round itself so much of mythical and mythological nonsense that whatever historical value

there was, has been totally hidden from the view. In the Satyarth Prakash in answer to a question, "Is there nothing truthful in the Puranas? Why do you condemn them wholesale?" he replies, "I admit that there is much that is valuable in them. But just as a grain of poison is sufficient to vitiate several pounds of food-stuff, similarly the poison of mythology has vitiated the whole Puranic literature." Several things that pass for Hinduism are really speaking anti-Vedic and have originated from the Puranas. For instance, monotheism or the doctrine of one-ness of God is the real Vedic doctrine. The Rig Veda says:

एक सद् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति

God is one, people call him in many ways. Here the Vedas preach the *one-ness of God* and *many-ness* of His *names*. There are numerous Vedic verses emphasizing the same point. But the Puranas teach polytheism. They begin with the number three, Brahma the Creator, Vishnu, the Sustainer and Shiva or Mahesh, the Destroyer. The Vedanta ascribes the three functions of creating, sustaining and destroying to one and one God only.

जन्माद्यस्य यत् ¹

But the Puranas ascribe them to three different entities as mentioned above. Then everything, big or small, has a presiding deity. There is your river-god, there is your mountain-god, there is your sky-god, there is your rain-god. Every leaf of the sacred *pīpal* tree is believed to be the abode of a separate god and the number of gods reaches millions of millions. This host of gods—as numerous as grains of sand, is made to govern the destinies of man, sometimes in harmony with each other, but mostly in the most unhappy discord.

The Vedas teach that God is unchangeable, and transcends all considerations of time and space. The Puranas teach that God incarnates or takes different bodily forms called Avatars according to the need. At some places ten avatars have been named, at others their number reaches twenty-four, including Gautam Buddha the founder of anti-Vedic Buddhism, as well as Nishkalanki or the spotless one that is yet to come.

Similarly birth-based caste-system, Suttee-system, or burning the widow alive with her dead

¹ Vedānta I 1-2

“That is Brahman from whom is the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe.”

husband, prohibition of widow remarriage and one thousand and one evils for which Hinduism is notorious, all find their sanction in the Puranas

Swami Dayanand has no choice but to condemn them outright, for, as long as they are counted as religious books, they will command the reverence of the people and the evil doctrines arising therefrom will never die. They may be good as fairy-tales, they may afford useful material for the researchist too. But as religious books they have to be discarded once for all.

This is a very bold step that Swami Dayanand takes. Many reformers before him hesitated to go so far and their half-measures ended in a failure. The great Shankaracharya tried to meet the Buddhists on their own ground and leave the Puranas untouched. But his work was more than undone by Ramanuj whose philosophy soon degenerated into rank fetish-worship. This was only because the Puranas were there. In our own times the noble work of Raja Ram Mohan Roy failed to bear any abiding result simply for one thing—he did not touch the Puranas. Had he denounced the Puranas, as he denounced idolatry, the question would have been solved once for all.

The second type of spuriousness is interpola-

tory. Mr. R. C. Dat was the first to discover that a change of a single letter from अग्ने (*agre* meaning 'before') to अग्ने (*agne* meaning fire) led people to think that the horrible Suttee system had also the sanction of the Rig Veda.¹ It is fortunate that the interpolated 'न' (n) did not secure a permanent place in the Vedas; but the loss of thousands of lives caused by this little mistake is simply horrible. The alloy in Shatpath and other Brahmanas, in the Grihya Sutras and in Manus as well as other Smritis is by no means negligible, and many orthodox people, too

१ इमा नारीरविधवा सुपत्नीराञ्जनेन सर्पिषा स विशन्तु ।

अनश्रवोज्जमीवा सुरत्ता आ रोहन्तु जनयो योनिमग्ने ॥

(ऋग्वेद १०।१८।७)

This mantra translated literally will mean —

"Let these unwidowed dames, faithful wives, adorn themselves with unguent and balm. Tearless, undiseased, decked with fair jewels, these dames may take their foremost place in the house." Obviously this mantra allots a prominent place to ladies. If अग्ने (foremost) is replaced by अग्ने (O fire), then the mantra can be twisted to refer to suttee system, but then too, the meaning is rather far-fetched as the epithets used for ladies are such as have no reference to husbandless widows. अविधवाः are clearly unwidowed dames. सुपत्नीः means good wives who are ever faithful to their husbands. योनिम् is house or family. Even if connected with अग्ने or fire, it cannot mean pyre or cremation-fire-ground. अग्ने रोहन्तु clearly means 'occupy the foremost place' or have an ascendancy in the family circle.

conservative to yield to reform, derive their inspiration from it. Besides it has exposed Hinduism to the criticism of the outsiders. They are never tired of exploiting such loopholes.

How these interpolations found their entry is a long story, much beyond the scope of this chapter. But briefly it can be said that ignorance, false religiosity, selfishness and meanness all have been working either jointly or severally.

In his famous book "An Introduction to the Commentary of the Rig Veda and other books" ऋग्वेदादि भाष्य भूमिका Swami Dayanand has given copious examples of mistranslations of the Veda *mantras* done by learned commentators through traditional ignorance. Even simple truths have been woefully distorted with the result that the Vedas appear either too grotesque or too nonsensical. Here I shall give only a few instances —

1. Rig Veda mandal 10, sukta 27, verse 22 runs thus —

वृक्षे वृक्षे नियता मीमन्द् गोस्ततो वयः प्रपतान् पूरुषादः ।

Griffith on the strength of Sayana translates it as follows —

"Bound fast to every tree the cow is lowing, and thence the man-consuming birds are flying."

I shall request the reader to try to make any sense out of it. Are the Vedas a meaningless jumble? The ancient lexicographer Yaska says—“The word ‘*Vriśhi*’ here means a bow and ‘*vayab*’ वय arrows. ‘*Gru*’ (गो) is the chord of the bow” (See Nirukta of Yaska, Nāgām, Kānda Chapter II). Thus the correct translation should be as follows.—

“When the chord of the bow tinkles, man-killing arrows issue forth therefrom”

2 Yajur Veda, Chapter XIX, Verse 71 runs as follows—

अपा फेनेन नमुचे गिर इन्द्रोदवर्तय ।

विश्व यदजय स्पृघ ॥

Uvāt and Mahidhār, the two famous commentators, translate it thus—“Indra cut the head of the demon Namuchi with the foam of waters, and won all the battles”

God knows who this demon Namuchi is and how his head is cut with the foams of waters. Is there any sense in it? Let me give a more rational rendering. *Namuchi* means cupid or love, as it clings to man. (See Apte) *Indra* is man, lord of the *indriyas* or senses. ‘*Apām phen*’ is animal fluid or virile semen. Thus the English equivalent of the Mantra is —

“Man cuts the head of cupid (controls cupidity) by the proper development of virile fluid and wins all” It is quite plain that a fully developed man alone can control himself

3 The translation of Yajur Veda, Chapter XXIII, Verses 19-22 as given by Mahidhar and Uvvat is indescribably obscene Griffith forbears to give its English rendering, remarking that in English language there are no indecent words that might express the idea underlying the mantras I too do not like to darken these pages with the objectionable stuff If the reader takes the trouble of going through Swami Dayanand's commentary, it will be his happy surprise to see a lot of difference It is only then that he will appreciate Swami Dayanand's wonderful work in this connection

The last instance of false religiosity is the production of the Puranas When the Hindus found that the Buddhists and Jains were composing interesting accounts of their Tirthankaras and holy personalities, in order to wean the masses from their influences the votaries of Hinduism thought it fit to compose parallel books and give them old names They little thought that these Puranas would bring into disgrace Hindu religion and will check the growth of the Hindus Had there been

no Puranas or Puranic ideas among the Hindus, the Christians and Moslems would have got nothing to speak against, nor made cheap conversions. It is the Puranas that upheld idolatry and dug a grave for Hinduism

Much of the stuff in the Puranas appears to be inspired by the foreign rulers of the country. For example the Bhavishya Puran gives in the form of prophecy a vague account of Mohammadan and British rule. The only rational explanation is that some Mohammadan rulers in order to win the confidence of people bribed the Hindu Pandits and they incorporated their names in the religious books of the Hindus. In my childhood I heard a story that the then ruling Queen Victoria was an incarnation of the Sulochana of the Ramayana, wife of Meghnad, with whom Rama was so pleased as to promise her a rule of India in Kaliyuga. Such things appear frivolous on the surface, but the mass psychology is a funny thing, history tells us that these ideas often leave an abiding influence on the mind of populace. At the time when I am writing this book, there is a Mohammadan in the Hyderabad State named Siddiq Dindar, who calls himself the incarnation of Visheshwar a holy man of the Lingait sect and exhorts the Lingaits and

other Hindus to come under his banner and embrace Islam. Simple folks believe him. They never question him that the very doctrine of incarnation is foreign to the Islamic religion. Such frauds are very common in the history of religions and Hinduism has a big share.

Mean selfishness of the interpolators found a free play in the composition of those books which dealt with the rules of inheritance. One such book is Dattaka Mimansa. In the beginning of the British Rule the book happened to be translated into English and came to be looked upon as an authority on the point of inheritance. But later on, it aroused suspicion and the Full Bench of the Allahabad High Court, under the presidentship of Sir John Edge decided the book as spurious. It is alleged that the book was written by one Nand Pandit in order to deprive a daughter's son of the right of inheritance.

Similarly Raghunani, a colleague and contemporary of Colebrook wrote Dattaka Chandrika in order to support the claim of an adopted son for a rich property. Happily the parties reconciled and the case did not proceed further. But no learned man doubts the spuriousness of the book.

Sircar Shastri's Hindu Law quotes another

instance of literary fraud About 1832, there was a case of Jains The Pandits of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta, were regarded as authority on the point of law of inheritance Bribed by one of the parties, they wrote a book and got it entered into the catalogue of the College Library Dr H. H. Wilson who was the Secretary of the College in those days somehow suspected foul play and caught the fraud The author of the mischief could not but admit his fault, and the Pandits of the College had to forfeit for ever the right of pronouncing verdict on this point¹

Such is the history of the spurious literature of the Hindus In one way it is natural For a nation of very long antiquity, it is possible to have such mishaps But unless there is a periodical filtration, the nation cannot keep its integrity To bring Hinduism to pristine purity, it was necessary to purge Hindu literature of this alloy The credit of this arduous task must go to Swami Dayanand

¹ Sircar Shastri's Hindu Law, p 187

CHAPTER XVII

VIEW OF LIFE

Much of the activities of a nation depends upon the view it takes of life. It is ultimately a question of philosophy and I do not like to drag the reader into the labyrinth of philosophical subtleties, nor I think that common people are ever in a philosophical attitude of mind. To be a philosopher always and in all circumstances is impossible even for a real philosopher, and to be consistent with his philosophy in his daily dealings has not been possible for many a one. But philosophies do influence men's lives,—lives of those who are original thinkers or *doctors*, i.e., *doctrine*-makers, of those who are *disciples* in the sense of imposing the *discipline* of those doctrines upon themselves and of those as well who drift along without ever bothering with the why and wherefore of anything. Under the surface of eating, drinking and be-merrying of common people also, there is found an almost invisible philosophical current that effects their lives. Fathers of philosophies leave a legacy

that percolates through different strata and descends down to the very bottom of the society

Hinduism is a home of big philosophies. They say in the West that the Hindu is a philosopher by tradition. Even the grass-cutter knows some philosophy and can philosophise over trifling matters. We are not going to examine the validity of any philosophy. But we do want to show that there are certain philosophies that have proved harmful to the worldly life of the Hindus. After their death, they went to the Heaven, or to the Hell or are still hanging in the purgatory. I do not know. But I can make bold to say that the Hindu's view of life has deterred him a good deal in making secular progress.

Two main defects in the attitude of the Hindu mind are the *dreamy* nature of the external world and the *dubious* nature of his own mind. The Hindu believes that the world is "an empty dream" and the constant pressure of this view has made him a veritable dreamer. He eats and drinks and sleeps simply because he cannot do otherwise. The *Jwan Yatra* (जीवन यात्रा) or course of life has to be run anyhow. How can he help it? But the external world, being once reduced to vapoury dream, the very incentive for hard work and re-

sistance goes away No child is afraid of stone lions and no king would like to marshal his armies against a foe whom he sees only in dream. The second thing is that somehow or other our philosophers have produced in our mind a doubt about our own knowledge They say that man is incapacitated by nature to know realities "I have a page before me" Is this proposition true? It may be true, it may be false "I am writing with my pen" Who can say that this statement is strictly correct? Am I dreaming or am I actually writing? "India is being governed by foreigners and we are slaves in their hands" Is this real and philosophically sound fact or the fiction of our dreaming mind only? The great earthquakes of Quetta and Behar which shook the whole of India—did they actually take place or only in my dream? This and many questions like this make the Hindu mind indecisive and lead to indolence, inactivity and in the end to utter ruin. The Gita says that *Sanshayatma Vinashyati* (संशयात्मा विनश्यति) or the man in doubt perishes We are full of doubts and we are perishing There is an army of Sadhus and Fakirs numbering tens of millions whose only object of life is to go to the house-holders and to impress upon them the dreamy and unreal charac-

ter of life Every minute it is being dinned into our ears that the world is nothing, that we have to quit it one day and that the best thing is to renounce it as soon as possible The result of all this is that pessimism reigns supreme We see sorrow all around us, we are in the grip of gloom Little wonder, then, that we are left behind in the march of life The gloom that shrouded the soul of Arjun on the battle-field of Kurukshetra is shrouding us likewise Then there was Shri Krishna to dispel it Now there is the Gita, but the Gita-readers are much gloomier than those who never read it Numerous commentaries of the book have simply made us more pessimistic.

Swami Dayanand's teachings are a great antidote to this evil He has given us a bold philosophy of the reality of God, reality of man and realities of the Universe in which man has to work. Swami Dayanand does not look upon the world as full of sorrow or gloom He sings the Rig Vedic mantra.¹

अग्ने य यज्ञमध्वर दिश्वत परिभूरसि । त इद्देवेषु गच्छति ।
 "O God, thou art circumventing a great pain-free activity which only the sages realize"

¹ Rig Ved2, I-1-4.

In his *Satyarth Prakash*, while answering the question, "Why did God make such a painful world?" he says that there is greater amount of happiness in the world than sorrow¹ In fact, it is a libel upon God, whose essence is good, to say that He has created a world full of pain. Swami Dayanand refutes such theories as:—

1. The world is a prison-house and we are here like prisoners
2. The world is unreal. We are only dreaming.
3. The life is but a bubble on the ocean, soon to dissolve itself into water.

A prisoner's mentality is a slave's mentality. One who looks upon the world with the eye of a prisoner can never try to improve the world, nor can he lead an independent life. Which prisoner in the world likes to improve the prison? Similarly, a man who is constantly thinking of the tran-

¹ (प्रश्न) जो न बनाता तो आनन्द में बना रहता और जीवों को भी सुख दुःख प्राप्त न होता ।

(उत्तर) यह आलसी और दरिद्र लोगों की बातें हैं, पुरुषार्थी की नहीं । और जीवों को प्रलय में क्या सुख वा दुःख है ? जो सृष्टि के सुख दुःख की तुलना की जाय तो सुख कई गुणा अधिक होता और बहुत से पवित्रात्मा जीव मुक्ति के साधन कर मोक्ष के आनन्द को भी प्राप्त होते हैं ।

(सत्यार्थप्रकाश समुल्लास ८)

sitory nature of the world, will seldom undertake a big work. If you go to have a sojourn in the jungle, you will surely not make a castle. One who has no abiding interest in the world will not try to remove the evils of the world.

Many philosophically disposed people think that Swami Dayanand has done a great blunder that he has insisted upon the separate existence of *Jna* (Soul) and *Ishtar* (God). They hold that to reduce these several categories of thought to one simple entity is the function of all philosophies. Swami Dayanand does not like to slavishly cling to a particular tradition. He says that the only function that all philosophies have ultimately to perform is to have true knowledge. Enforced or belaboured monism has always failed to bring about that harmony of thought which is necessary for all worldly progress. It is easier to lie on a sofa, dreaming that you are no other than the Almighty Brahman and that the sun and the moon are your own creations. But all that happy dream vapours away if one of the legs of the sofa breaks, and you have to wait for a petty carpenter. Such philosophies, whatever their value in other spheres, could not bring about reconciliation between the practical outer-life and the inner musings. So long as such

nihilistic views about the external world remained in the West, science could not make any progress, nor scientific inventions were possible. In India for several centuries the true test of a religious man has been the negligence of his body and other earthly belongings. A dirty ash-besmeared, and extremely emaciated man of crazy looks is even now held as one who is the most advanced in spirituality and in direct communion with God. Swami Dayanand condemns such outlook. The Vedas say —

विष्णो कर्माणि पश्यत यतो ब्रतानि पस्पशे ।

(ऋग्वेद)

Look at the works of God and let your vows be inspired thereby *it's all matter*

God is the creator, and the best way of obeying his commands is to be creative. God is all-loving and the true way of serving him is to serve humanity. True renunciation does not lie in self-immolation, but in suffering for the sake of others. Unless we do our duty to our fellow-beings, it is not possible to please God. Swami Dayanand's view is that the salvation of a man lies not in his ignoring others, but in his effort to bring about the salvation of all. Swami Dayanand looks upon the world as a great school where one has to evolve

one's potentialities by labour and love. His is a philosophy of bold action, not of idle musings. He appears to be saying in the words of an English poet—

I slept I dreamt that life is beauty,
I woke I found that life is duty

CHAPTER XVIII

RECAPITULATION

In the foregoing chapters we have briefly narrated the forces that Swami Dayanand's life and teachings have generated and the influence which they are exercising on Hindu solidarity. It is a matter of gratification that the Hindu leaders acknowledge it and pay their respectful tribute to the great soul (Vide Appendix).

In writing these pages I have exposed myself to a grave charge and I must say a word or two by way of apology. The disciples of Swami Dayanand hold that his teachings are meant for the whole world irrespective of caste, creed or nationality and to confine their scope to Hindus is reprehensibly narrow [communalism. The first part I admit and the second I deny. Being a follower of Swami Dayanand and sharing the views of my fellow-disciples, I never mean to narrow down the scope of the Vedas or of Swami Dayanand's work. The Hinduism of Dayanand is not a narrow circle. It is congruent with humanity. It includes

all men, of whatever country or nation. It excludes none. The Hinduism which Swami Dayanand advocates and which is fundamentally nothing else than pure Vedism was never meant to be a narrow sect geographically or racially. The basic rules on which Hindu culture is built know no narrow boundaries. Arbitrary walls which are dividing Hinduism into so many ridiculous compartments are of a very late origin and must be demolished. Even those people who do not believe in the divine origin or infallibility of the Vedas and differ widely from Swami Dayanand on this point, belong to a culture that is essentially the same. What we have to see is the broad outline and not the details.

A question is sometimes asked, "Indian first and then Hindu: or Hindu first and then Indian?" I call such questions nonsensical and in some respects pernicious too. Am I first biped, then a man, or man first and then biped? A man who has any sense of duty knows well and must boldly assert that he is Hindu and Indian both simultaneously. As a true Hindu, he must have patriotism and as a true patriot, he must be Hindu. A Hindu who leaves the country in the lurch and engrosses himself in selfish fattening of his own body is not a true Hindu. He lacks that very thing which is

the kernel of Hinduism. And a patriot who loves his country and his countrymen must take into account the culture for which he stands. The love of country does not consist of the love of hills, lakes or mines of that country. Every foreigner who wants to conquer the country and rule over it loves its hills and mines, so much that he does not want to willingly leave any inch of them. But you cannot call him a patriot. The real patriotism is of a different metal. Similarly real religiosity takes into account all interests and excludes none. Swami Dayanand's main contribution to the store of human knowledge is to unify divers interests and treat human life as an organic whole.

APPENDIX

I

“Swami Dayanand Saraswati is certainly one of the most powerful personalities who have shaped modern India and are responsible for its moral regeneration and religious revival. His Samaj—the Arya Samaj—is clearly and unquestionably one of the most potent factors in rebuilding, reforming and rejuvenating the institutions of Hindu India ”

(*Subhas Chandra Bose in Vedic Magazine, December 1922*).

II

“I offer my homage of veneration to Swami Dayanand the Great Path Maker in Modern India, who through bewildering tangles of creeds and practices—the dense under-growth of the degenerate days of our country cleared a straight path that was meant to lead the Hindus to a simple and rational life of devotion to God and service

for man. With a clear sighted vision of truth and courage of determination, he preached and worked for our self-respect and vigorous awakening of mind that could strive for a harmonious adjustment with the progressive spirit of the modern age and at the same time keeping in perfect touch with that glorious past of India when it revealed its personalities in freedom of thought and action, in an unclouded radiance of spiritual realisation."

(*Dr. R. C. Vaidya Tagore—A message of the cross-
sion of a new era, a new era of Rishi Dayanand's
dharma—Ind. Con. Convention, 1910, p. 5*).

III

"He was a very soldier of Light, a warrior in God's world, a sculptor of men and institutions, a bold and rugged victor of the difficulties which matter presents to spirit. And the whole sums itself up to me in a powerful impression of spiritual practicality."

(*Dr. R. C. Vaidya Tagore—Ind. Con. Convention, 1910, p. 5*).

IV

"When Swami Dayanand Saraswati began his labours in India, as a religious and social reformer, he met with bitter opposition from the organised

Christian Missionary propaganda. The Christian missionaries almost unchecked and unresisted at that time, threatened the very existence of Hindu life and openly avowed their determination to destroy the Hindu Religion. Some of the Christian zealots even predicted the utter collapse of Hinduism at no distant date. But Swami Dayanand Saraswati met the challenge of the Christian propagandists and envisaged a brighter future for the Sanatan Dharma. His work has borne abundant fruit ”

(Dr Sudhindra Bose, M A , Ph D , Professor in the University of Iowa, U S A) (Com. Vol , p 194)

V

“Among the many rich legacies that Swami Dayananda has left to us, his unequivocal pronouncement against untouchability is undoubtedly one”

(Mahatma Gandhi—Commemoration Volume, p. 1)

VI

“I wish to mention this that Rishi Dayanand’s contribution to the cause of the Regeneration of the Hindu Society is so great that he may be regard-

ed as one of the greatest Hindus of the 19th century. The Arya Samaj has done a very great service to the rejuvenation of the Hindu Society.”

(*Tarak Nath Das, M A , Ph D , Professor in Munich—Commemoration Volume, p 104*)

VII

“The honour of being the first apostle of Hindu Sanghatan in modern days must ever rest with Swami Dayanand Saraswati the illustrious founder of the Arya Samaj movement ”

(*Shri Veer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar “A Review of the History and Work of the Hindu Maha Sabha and Hindu Sanghatan Movement”, p XVII*).

VIII

“The services rendered by Arya Samaj to the Hindu nation are too well known to need any mention in this address. Some writers describe it as the Protestant Church of the Vedic Religion. Arya Samajists regard that the mission of the sect founded by Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati is to restore Hinduism to its pristine glorious position of simplicity, purity and sublimity, as seen and understood by them to be in the Vedas. Attempt at

definitions of big movements in one short sentence is very seldom successful in giving a correct and comprehensive conception of the various aspects of any dynamic and complex organisation. Each of the two definitions given above emphasize some of the most important aspects of the Arya Samaj movement, while one points out to the reformatory tendencies and the essentially rationalistic and comparative method of discussion adopted by the founder and the first teacher of this new church in the Satyarth Prakash, the other clearly vindicates the supreme and unchangeable position which Vedas occupy in the teachings of the Samaj. The activities of the Samaj are controlled by the teachings of the Vedic Rishis, interpreted in a rationalistic spirit. But in my opinion this definition, though good and admirable by itself is still incomplete. It has to be supplemented by an additional characteristic. Vedic teachings interpreted in a rationalistic spirit are further applied in solving problems of life on a nationalistic basis. Religion is preached and studied to foster the spirit of nationalism and nationalism thus fostered, tends to broaden the vision and the outlook of the followers."

(*Mr. M S Aney's "Hyderabad Administration"*
pp. 2-3).